RICHARDSON DEAD AFTER SKI INJURY, PG22

Style

Toronto Fashion Week
pgs 16-17

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VANCOUVER • THURSDAY, MARCH 19, 2009 metronews

Celebrity Buzz

Sarah works on positive energy
pg 26

JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

MLS **Cheers**

Members of the Vancouver Southsiders Whitecaps supporters club celebrate Vancouver being granted a Major League Soccer franchise at the Shark Club on Georgia Street last night. The team will play at a renovated B.C. Place in 2011. From left: Pedram Shakibarfar, Brett Graham, Nazz Catania, Devon Rowcliffe and Liis Graham in back. **Coverage, pgs 4 and 14**

Losses not B.C. responsibility, says Taylor

COURT Former B.C. finance minister Carole Taylor says it's not up to the province to dictate whether the Canada Line should compensate business owners for revenue lost during construction.

Taylor

Taylor testified in B.C. Supreme Court yesterday after the owner of a former Cambie Street business, Hazel and Company, launched a civil suit over financial losses caused by construction.

She said compensation issues are the responsibility of TransLink and the Canada Line, and suggested those organizations meet with business owners to discuss the matter.

METRO VANCOUVER

ShareYourViews
vancouverletters@metronews.ca

Riding the Recession

Now through the end of March, Metro will share advice on how to cut down on expenses and navigate your way through the recession.

Food
- **Local meals for a steal, pg 18**

Tomorrow
- **How the recession is changing the musical landscape for fans, music publications, and even television.**

Please recycle

Stolen mask recovered

Security guard returns found item after reading Metro article

SAM SMITH
for Metro Vancouver

A valuable aboriginal mask stolen from the hospital room of a sleeping quadriplegic man has been returned after a security guard read about it in Metro newspaper.

Ben Cohnstaedt, 21, works security at First United Church. He said he found the mask on the Fraser Street bus on the Downtown Eastside two weeks ago.

At the time, he didn't think anything of it. He took it home and hanged the mask, valued at about $15,000, up on his wall.

Cohnstaedt

Ryall

"I've found a couple things on the bus, but nothing worth that much," Cohnstaedt said. "Then I read about it in Metro yesterday and thought it could be the stolen mask."

That night at his work, two police constables arrived to answer an unrelated missing persons call.

Cohnstaedt took the opportunity to tell them he may have found the mask.

"It was handed over to police in a red bag with a copy of Metro underneath," VPD Const. Jana McGuinness said. "All it took was four days, open and shut case."

Norman Ryall, owner of the mask, said he is grateful to have it back.

"It means so much to me," Ryall said. "It's spiritual, ritualistic."

Ryall, 52, who has been paralyzed since age two, has lived at the George Pearson Centre, a residential hospital in Vancouver, for 30 years. He had the mask hanging on his wall when he went to bed on the night of Feb. 28. It was gone in the morning.

"People stealing from people in the hospital … It's sacred ground, no theft should happen there," Cohnstaedt said.

VANCOUVER 2010 **Games**

VANOC sues ticket broker over resales

COURT A ticket broking company has been taken to court by VANOC for the alleged unauthorized reselling of 2010 Olympic tickets.

Reselling or scalping tickets is not illegal in British Columbia, but the Olympic organizers claim that Coast2Coast Tickets is breaking the ticket-sales agreement between VANOC and authorized retailers.

According to the terms and conditions of purchasing seats to 2010 events, tickets can't be resold for monetary gain.

The B.C. Supreme Court lawsuit also alleges that Coast2Coast Tickets is illegally using official Olympic trademarks.

The founder of another company reselling Olympic tickets said he's not worried VANOC will sue ShowTimeTickets next.

Mario Livich, who has been facilitating the purchase and resale of Olympic tickets since December, said yesterday he doesn't understand why Coast2Coast is being sued.

"Reselling tickets is a legal and valued service to the public," he said. "A free market in any industry is the best for consumers because it invites competition."

"I feel we're playing by the rules so it's not an issue," Livich added.

Calls to Coast2Coast Tickets were not returned by deadline.

KRISTEN THOMPSON
/METRO VANCOUVER

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Special Olympics B.C. Summer Games host named
Abbotsford will host the 2009 Special Olympics B.C. Summer Games, organizers of the event announced yesterday. More than 1,500 athletes and coaches will converge on the city from July 9 to 12. **METRO VANCOUVER**

Local

Fox tops torch poll

More than half of Canadians polled said if they were an Olympic torchbearer and could hand the flame to anyone — living or dead — they'd choose Coquitlam legend Terry Fox, left. Other prominent Canadians chosen were Wayne Gretzky, Pierre Trudeau, Gordie Howe and Nancy Greene.

NEWS1130.COM

Council set to debate cage fighting next week

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

DEBATE Vancouver city council is getting ready to grapple with the issue of mixed martial arts contests within city limits.

A report that goes before council next Thursday gives no staff recommendation, but asks councillors to provide direction on whether or not MMA events like ultimate fighting should be sanctioned by the Vancouver Athletic Commission.

In the report, the Vancouver Police Department warns that banning MMA outright could result in more underground events with no "controlling force" in place to monitor them.

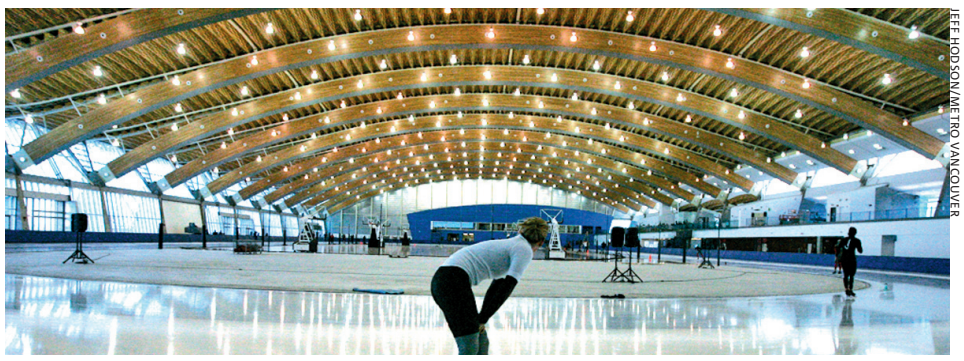
As an example, police added, a man was shot in the leg in February 2008 at an MMA event held on Musqueam land in South Vancouver.

Denis Kang is Vancouver's best-known mixed martial artist. He fights in the UFC.

News in brief

MAYOR CHARGED Former Coquitlam mayor Jon Kingsbury is facing three criminal charges including fraud and theft of $5,000. Kingsbury is accused of having posed as his business partner to claim the man's travel trailer, which was in a Langley repair shop.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

A speed skater trains at the Olympic Oval in Richmond. The wooden roof beams are attracting owls.

Oval attracts owls

SAM SMITH
for Metro Vancouver

The barn owl caught on TV flying around the Richmond Olympic Oval during last weekend's speed skating championship has been found dead.

The bird is the third one to die — likely of starvation — at the Oval, according to the Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Society. Its workers have so far removed two clutches of baby owls from the cavernous facility.

Rob Hope, head bird-care supervisor, said yesterday that barn owl homes are being destroyed and they're looking for places to nest. They're attracted to the Oval's wood beams and heat.

PHOTO COURTESY OF OWL

A parliament of barn owls rescued from the Olympic Oval at the Orphaned Wildlife Rehabilitation Society's care centre.

"In a building like that, we can't go up and net them or capture them," he said. "So we have to wait, because these birds will get hungry if there's no food, then they can't hang on anymore."

Hope said owls don't store body fat, so it's only a matter of time before they fall and can be easily captured. Although, not all survive the plunge.

Hope wants plastic curtains installed on all entrances to keep the birds from swooping in.

News in brief

STATEMENTS The RCMP and City of Surrey will now be allowed to issue joint impact statements whenever someone is convicted of a firearms offence, news1130.com reports. This is in response to a recent spate of gang-style shootings.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

metronews.ca

What's online today.

Video Terror suspect returns to jail claiming bail conditions were tearing his family apart at **metronews.ca/canada**

Blogs Linda Lundstrom's comeback continues at Toronto Fashion Week

Video Prime Minister Harper defends optimistic outlook on economy at **metronews.ca/canada**

Lotteries

Lotto 6/49	11, 27, 29, 33, 34 & 44 Bonus 36
BC 49	12, 25, 26, 35, 37 & 39 Bonus 23
Extra	46, 61, 64, 80

These results are not official.

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Team to make a big move — literally
The Whitecaps' current home, Swangard Stadium, seats fewer than 7,000, while B.C. Place will have seating for 20,000. METRO VANCOUVER

'Best is yet to come'

City granted major league soccer franchise

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

After an absence of almost three decades, the highest level of professional soccer in North America is returning to Vancouver.

Major League Soccer (MLS) commissioner Don Garber yesterday awarded the city one of two expansion franchises.

Vancouver's franchise — which may or may not be named Whitecaps — will begin playing in 2011 at a renovated soccer-specific B.C. Place Stadium before 20,000 screaming fans.

"I thought I had seen the best of soccer here in the late '70s and early '80s," said Bob Lenarduzzi, president of Whitecaps FC.

"It's my firm belief now, when I see what's taking place with MLS, that the best is yet to come."

Deposits ($50 a seat) for the first 5,000 season tickets go on sale Saturday at 10 a.m. The price of tickets has not been set.

JEFF HODSON / METRO VANCOUVER

Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson at the Westin Bayshore after the city was awarded a Major League Soccer franchise yesterday morning.

"We want to be affordable," Lenarduzzi said. "We want to be in the Canucks league, but not charge their prices."

The Whitecaps logo was absent from yesterday's press conference; all signage read Vancouver 2011.

The franchise, Lenarduzzi said, will operate under Vancouver 2011 in the short-term to differentiate it from the current Whitecaps FC, which will continue in the first division of the United Soccer Leagues for the next two seasons.

"For me there is no other name than Whitecaps," he said."But if the masses suggest they want something else, we're going to listen to them."

Franchise co-owners Greg Kerfoot, Jeff Mallett, Steve Luczo and Steve Nash paid $35 million for the franchise, $5 million less than the asking rate.

Whitecaps fans thrilled by news

SUPPORTERS Whitecaps fans were over the moon after yesterday's Major League Soccer announcement.

"It's massive," said Brett Graham, one of three fans who attended decked out in the 'Caps blue-and-white. "A lot of us have been following the team for a long time in the USL (United Soccer Leagues). This takes it to the next level."

Fans, some of whom were heading to Seattle tonight to take in the Seattle Sounders MLS début, celebrated the expansion at the Shark Club last night. METRO VANCOUVER

Portland franchise could stoke Northwest rivalry with 'Caps

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

With Vancouver awarded a Major League Soccer (MLS) franchise — and Seattle kicking off its inaugural MLS season tonight — could Oregon's largest city be next?

Portland, one of three cities (along with Ottawa and St. Louis) vying for the second 2011 franchise, is a soccer rival of both Vancouver and Seattle.

"One of the drivers of the passion in the NASL (the defunct North American Soccer League) was the Northwest rivalry," said MLS commissioner Don Garber.

"We'll be able to replicate that with Seattle and Vancouver, and, if Portland comes in, you get a trifecta."

Whitecaps FC president Bob Lenarduzzi said that as much as he would like a franchise in Ottawa, it would be "unbelievable" if Portland was given the second 2011 franchise.

The announcement could be made as soon as Friday. Lenarduzzi said he believes the announcement will be made in the next couple of weeks.

B.C. Place to get $365M facelift before 2011

STADIUM B.C. Place will undergo an estimated $365 million in renovations ahead of the 2011 MLS season, transforming the aging stadium into a 20,000-seat soccer-specific venue with a state-of-the-art retractable roof.

Major League Soccer commissioner Don Garber said the idea of a planned downtown waterfront stadium "really got our creative juices flowing" but said a revamped B.C. Place was going to be fantastic.

The Whitecaps have signed a lease to play at B.C. Place until 2016.

SUBMITTED

An artist's rendering of a renovated, soccer-specific B.C. Place.

Changes include new seating, concessions, turf, and a centrally hung scoreboard. The roof will be similar to the Commerzbank Arena in Frankfurt.

Mayor Gregor Robertson said he doesn't think a waterfront stadium is dead, but it has been "brutal to proceed with."

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Attorney general to run in Delta-South
Attorney general Wally Oppal has announced he will be running in his home riding of Delta-South in May's provincial election. Oppal was elected to the Vancouver-Frasier riding in 2005. The spot in Delta opened up when Liberal MLA Val Roddick announced she wouldn't be seeking another term. METRO VANCOUVER

Lack of planning caused spill

KRISTEN THOMPSON
kristen.thompson@metronews.ca

A lack of communication and failure to follow procedures has been blamed for a massive pipeline rupture that spilled crude oil into a suburban Burnaby neighbourhood two years ago.

The Transportation Safety Board (TSB) yesterday released the final results of an investigation into the July 2007 accident.

More than 234,000 litres of oil drenched Inlet Drive and spilled into Burrard Inlet and after a contractor's excavator ruptured a pipeline owned by Kinder Morgan Canada.

The report listed six causes of the accident, including poor communication and a lack of pre-construction planning and on-site supervision.

It found that the pipeline's location wasn't accurately indicated on the contractor's design drawings — which were based on a 1957 drawing — and the location wasn't found until construction began.

Larry Gales, investigator in charge of the investigation, said the consultant, contractor and Kinder Morgan didn't properly consult with each other before construction started.

"The lack of respect for on-site pre-construction procedures and inadequate communication compromised the safe operation of the pipeline," Gales said.

The TSB also noted that standard emergency shutdown procedures weren't followed after the accident, which increased the volume of crude released.

Spray's reach

- Crude oil also sprayed 11 houses and caused a large evacuation of the area, affecting 250 residents.

KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

A worker walks along Inlet Drive in Burnaby after a ruptured pipeline spewed more 234,000 litres of crude oil in July 2007.

News in brief

VIRK TRIAL A bail hearing is underway in Vancouver to determine whether Kelly Ellard should be released from prison until it's decided whether she'll face a fourth trial for the murder of Reena Virk, cknw.com reports. The issue will go to Supreme Court of Canada on April 20.

SHELTERS Two newly renovated homeless shelters in Vancouver have been opened around-the-clock, the province announced yesterday. Beacon and Haven shelters will provide 100 shelter beds and warm meals to people in the Downtown Eastside.

RENTERS The Residential Tenancy Branch is opening a new outreach office in Vancouver to give tenants and landlords better access to information about their rights and responsibilities. The office, which will be shared with B.C. Housing, will be open form 8:30 a.m. to noon Monday to Friday.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Cops sieze $120K of drugs in 'compassion' ring bust

DRUGS Dozens of large bags filled with pot and mushrooms were displayed by North Vancouver police yesterday after busting a dial-a-dope operation on a tip from Crimestoppers.

The sophisticated ring called itself a compassionate association that provided — at a cost — drugs to sick people. It had more than 1,000 clients, for whom it provided menus and even issued receipts.

RCMP Cpl. Marlene Morton said yesterday that so-called compassion clubs are illegal in Canada and that there are legal ways to obtain medical marijuana.

"The trafficker was selling the drugs for recreational use, not for medical use," Morton said.

DOMINIQUE ARMAND / FOR METRO VNACOUVER

RCMP Cpl. Marlene Morton shows bags of drugs confiscated by police.

The confiscated drugs have an estimated street value of about $120,000.

Four of the 13 people arrested face various drug-related charges and will appear in court on March 26.

DOMINIQUE ARMAND/
FOR METRO VANCOUVER

B.C. bans smoking in cars with kids

FINES As of April 7, anyone caught smoking in a car where a child under 16 is present could be fined $109, the provincial government said yesterday.

Mary Polak, minister of Healthy Living and Sport, said the law will be implemented to protect "vulnerable children who are confined to a vehicle" from second-hand smoke.

Anyone who doesn't pay the fine could lose their driver's licence and vehicle insurance. Similar laws are also in place in Nova Scotia, Ontario and the Yukon.

METRO VANCOUVER

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Commerce and Business Administration Accounting ▸ Business Administration ▸ Business Management ▸ Computing Science and Information Systems ▸ Financial Services Management ▸ Hotel and Restaurant Management ▸ Marketing Management ▸ Office Administration	Tues, Apr 7	5pm	A1470
Health Sciences Dispensing Optician ▸ Health Care Support Worker ▸ Health Information Management ▸ Nursing ▸ Psychiatric Nursing	Tues, Apr 7	5pm	A1470
Science and Technology Animal Health Technology ▸ Physical Education and Coaching ▸ Physical Education Instruction ▸ Sport Science	Tues, Apr 7	5pm	A1470
University Transfer Arts & Science	Tues, Apr 7	5pm	A1470

NEW WESTMINSTER CAMPUS	DATE	TIME	ROOM
Child, Family and Community Studies Aboriginal Child and Youth Care ▸ Behavioural Interventionist ▸ Child and Youth Care Counsellor ▸ Classroom and Community Support ▸ Community Social Service Worker ▸ Early Childhood Education ▸ Therapeutic Recreation ▸ Youth Justice	Thurs, Apr 9	5pm	2201
Child and Youth Care (Bachelor's degree)	Thurs, Apr 9	5pm	1620
Commerce and Business Administration Accounting ▸ Business Administration ▸ Business Management ▸ Computing Science and Information Systems ▸ Financial Services Management ▸ Hotel and Restaurant Management ▸ Marketing Management ▸ Office Administration	Thurs, Apr 9	5pm	2201
Dispensing Optician	Thurs, Apr 9	5pm	2201
Performing Arts Music ▸ Stagecraft ▸ Theatre	Thurs, Apr 9	5pm	2201
Physical Education and Coaching (Bachelor's degree)	Thurs, Apr 9	5pm	2201
University Transfer Arts & Science	Thurs, Apr 9	5pm	2201
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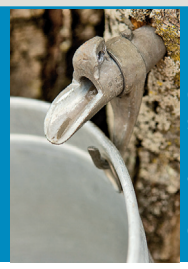
Workers take control of auto plant

In the latest twist in a saga that has been brewing since two auto plants in Windsor, Ont., shut down early last week, about a dozen workers occupied the Aradco plant last night, saying they will not leave until they get what they are owed. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Canada



Syrup surging

Ontario's maple syrup producers have struck gold. Following four years of poor production in rival Quebec and a surge in overseas popularity, syrup prices have risen by as much as 30 per cent. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Harper vows no GST hikes

PM lashes out at critics over Tories' economic policies

Prime Minister Stephen Harper yesterday warned Canadians could end up paying more taxes under a different government, suggesting his opponents might reverse his rollbacks on the GST.

Harper deflected recent criticism of his government's economic policies by former Bank of Canada governor David Dodge, who predicted a long recession, but said Ottawa could help reverse the deficit by, for example, raising the GST by a percentage point once the economy begins to recover.

"Let me assure you, while our opponents may favour raising the GST back up, this government will not do that."
Prime Minister Stephen Harper

"That's just wrong," Harper told a Toronto press conference. He added the GST cuts — that lowered the GST from seven per cent to five per cent in two steps — were an important boost to the economy. He cited the cuts as the key reason Canada was "one of the last major economies to go into recession."

Said Harper: "Let me assure you, while our opponents may favour raising the GST back up, this government will not do that."

Harper also lashed out at opposition parties for doing nothing more than criticize.

"Of course, we've had no alternative suggestions from anyone on any other course of action to take," he said.

"I think the opposition simply attacking the Canadian economy adds nothing. I mean, we all know we have difficult circumstances."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Kenney not sorry for cutting Arab group's funds

DISPUTE Immigration Minister Jason Kenney made no apologies yesterday for ending the flow of funds to the Canadian Arab Federation, which he says has expressed support for terror groups.

CAF president Khaled Mouammar believes Canada should regard Hamas and Hezbollah as "legitimate organizations," Kenney said. Both groups are on the Canadian government's list of groups "associated with terrorism," according to the public safety department's website.

CAF executive director Mohamed Boudjenane was surprised by the minister's comments, and surprised to learn about the end of funding for programs the organization runs to help settle newcomers and give them English lessons.

"Most of the people that use our services are Chinese," he said. "You aren't going to punish CAF, but these immigrants."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

St. John's Chopper memorial

GREG LOCKE/REUTERS

Prime Minister Stephen Harper arrives for a memorial service for the 17 victims of the March 22 helicopter crash at the Basilica of St. John the Baptist in St. John's, N.L., yesterday.

1 Canadian killed, 2 injured in crash

ARGENTINA A Montreal man was killed in a bus crash in northeast Argentina early Tuesday morning and two other Quebecers were injured.

Local media reports identified the Montrealer who died as retired Quebec judge Gaston Labrèche, believed to be in his 70s. His wife Marcelle was reportedly among the injured.

Also injured was Audrey Jobin of Montreal's South Shore. Her boyfriend, Yannick Leblanc, was on the bus. There are no immediate details on the nature and severity of her injuries or those suffered by the other Canadian casualty.

Leblanc told Radio-Canada that at the time of the crash, there was a big storm and strong winds.

Local media outlet 26 Noticias reported that two buses were involved in the crash. CBC NEWS ONLINE

News in brief

ALBERTA A covert police operation turned deadly at a Calgary carwash yesterday morning when a suspected car thief resisted arrest and was shot by an officer. The suspect was rushed to hospital but died hours later. METRO CANADA

Saskatchewan sees budget surplus

FINANCES Saskatchewan is projecting a $424.5-million surplus in a downturn-defying the 2009-10 budget as a jump in potash revenues allows the province to boost spending and cut taxes.

The $10.2-billion budget presented yesterday by Premier Brad Wall's Saskatchewan Party is balanced for the 16th straight year and includes a $1.5-billion infrastructure program aimed at roads, hospitals and schools.

REUTERS

McGill med grads leaving Quebec

FINDINGS Most of the doctors educated at McGill University are leaving Quebec after they graduate, primarily for Ontario, new figures show, a trend reflected at other medical schools in Canada.

Fifty-two per cent of recent medical graduates from McGill — the only English-language medical faculty in the province — were found working outside of Quebec, mostly in Ontario, where 22 per cent settled. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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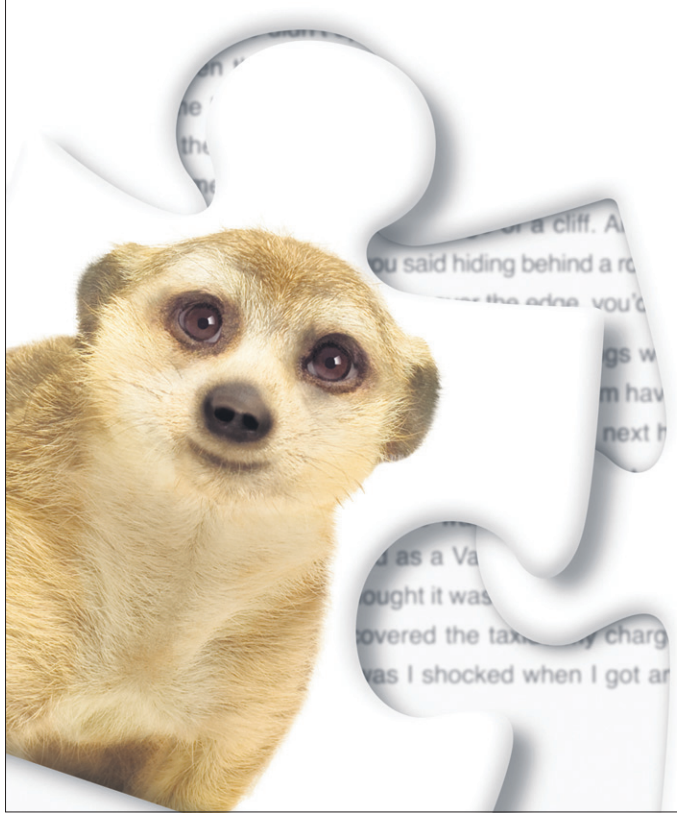

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2700B Barnet Hwy.

22 - 2988 Glen Dr.

2 - 901 Lougheed Hwy.

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North Vancouver

Capilano Mall

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1748 Lonsdale Ave.

1392 Main St.

Richmond

Aberdeen Centre

Admiralty Centre Mall

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U.S. signs on for gay rights

The U.S., in a reversal of Bush administration policy, will sign on to a UN declaration that calls for the decriminalization of homosexuality, the State Department said. REUTERS

World

Russia bans seal hunting

Russia said yesterday it had banned the hunting of baby seals, weeks after Prime Minister Vladimir Putin called it a "bloody industry." Seals inhabit Russia's White Sea region in the Arctic. As in Canada and Norway, hunters target the fluffy baby seals — also known as "whitecoats" for their highly valued snow-white fur — in early spring and club thousands to death. REUTERS

Thousands trapped in Sri Lanka battle

More than 640 rescued by navy, military says

Sri Lanka's navy rescued more than 640 people who fled the island's war zone in a clutch of small boats as Tamil Tiger rebels opened fire, the military said yesterday, but tens of thousands remained trapped.

The military has the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) cornered in 28 square kilometres of the Indian Ocean island's northeast, and is battling to deal a final blow to their 25-year separatist rebellion.

At least 18 more rebels were killed in the latest clashes in the shrinking war zone, a military official said yesterday.

The UN children's agency UNICEF said hundreds of children were among the 2,800 civilians who have been killed in fighting already, and warned that many more were still at risk. The government calls the figures unsubstantiated.

The United Nations said last week the Tigers were forcibly holding thousands of people inside the war zone and making them fight or build defences.

The LTTE says people are staying out of choice. Nearly 44,000 have fled so far this year, almost 5,000 of them since Saturday.

Yesterday, 643 people in 35 small boats escaped a no-fire zone after navy sailors chased away LTTE boats that were firing on them, military spokesman Brigadier Udaya Nanayakkara said.

REUTERS

Tigers listed

- The Tigers are on U.S., EU, Canadian and Indian terrorist lists largely because of their extensive use of suicide attacks during a civil war that erupted in 1983 as a fight for a separate state for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority.

Dodd admits to inclusion of bonus

BAILOUT U.S. Senate banking committee chairman Christopher Dodd told CNN yesterday that he added language to the federal stimulus bill to make sure contracts for bonuses at companies receiving federal bailout money stayed in place.

On Tuesday, Dodd denied that he had anything to do with adding the language, which has been used by officials at AIG to justify paying millions of dollars in bonuses to executives.

The head of AIG said yesterday he was trying desperately to prevent the company from collapsing when he allowed the payment of $165 million US in bonuses that have stoked outrage stretching from the White House to Main Street.

AIG has drawn intense fire from the public, politicians and U.S. President Barack Obama for accepting government aid and then handing out fat bonuses — including bonuses of $1 million or more paid out to 73 people.

Many voters view the financial rescues as free handouts to wealthy executives who made bad decisions, and the big bonuses have fueled that anger.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Madagascar **New leader**

SIPHIWE SIBEKO/REUTERS

Madagascar's new president, Andry Rajoelina, greets his supporters at Antananarivo city centre yesterday after ousting Marc Ravalomanana. A deal for South Korea's Daewoo Logistics to lease more than one million hectares of Madagascar to grow food crops is off, the island's new leader said.

Austrian father enters guilty plea

INCEST TRIAL Josef Fritzl reversed his plea and admitted guilt on all charges yesterday after watching the daughter he locked up and raped for 24 years describe her ordeal in 11 hours of video testimony.

The 73-year-old Austrian, who fathered seven children with daughter Elisabeth in a purpose-built cellar under his house, admitted enslaving her and murdering one of their babies by neglecting to seek medical treatment for the infant.

He is likely to face the rest of his life behind bars.

"I plead guilty to (all) the charges in the indictment," he told Judge Andrea Humer, speaking clearly and deliberately.

Defence lawyer Rudolf Mayer told reporters he was "completely surprised" by Fritzl's plea change but said his client may have been overcome by Elisabeth's harrowing statement, screened at closed-door proceedings on Tuesday.

REUTERS

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Melting ice could cause trouble
U.S. scientists say the West Antarctic ice may melt if sea temperatures rise by five degrees, wiping some small islands off the map. **REUTERS**

Italy hoping to redraw its border

Climate change puts issue on the table

Italy wants to redefine its border with Switzerland to take into account melting glaciers and eroding mountain peaks because of climate change over the past 70 years.

A draft bill presented last month by Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said the border between the two countries should be considered "mobile."

"It is necessary that the border outline can follow the gradual and natural shifts in mountain peaks and glaciers provoked by changing temperatures and climate," said the bill, which is now being discussed by the lower house's foreign affairs committee.

It said recent surveys had shown that some of the natural marks which had been used to define the border in 1924-1938 had disappeared, and that both countries had agreed in 2004 on the need for an update.

Any change was unlikely to affect citizens of either country, the bill added.

REUTERS

French union protests start, Sarkozy under pressure

STRIKE French rail workers walked off their jobs yesterday to kick off 24 hours of nationwide strikes and protests called by the country's main unions to denounce President Nicolas Sarkozy's handling of the economy.

Opinion polls say around 75 per cent of voters back the protest movement, posing Sarkozy's toughest challenge since he took office in May 2007.

The unions have presented a shopping list of demands, including a boost to poorer paid salaries, more measures to protect employment, a tax hike for high earners and a halt to planned job cuts in the public sector. **REUTERS**

News in brief

WORLD WIDE WEB The Internet could provide an early warning system for environmental damage, imitating an online watchdog that gives alerts about outbreaks of disease, scientists said yesterday. Blogs, videos, online news and other sources could yield bits of information to aid problems such as global warming, pollution, deforestation or over-fishing, they said.

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Egypt	14.9 ¢	Oman	17.9 ¢
Iran from	3.9 ¢	SaudiArabia from	3.9 ¢
Iraq from	4.9 ¢	Syria	18.9 ¢
Israel	2.9 ¢	U.A.E.	19.9 ¢

Latin America

ECUADOR	CUBA
12.9 ¢/min	85 ¢/min

Haiti	16.9 ¢	Bolivia from	6.9 ¢
Honduras	15.9 ¢	Chile	2.9 ¢
Panama from	3.9 ¢	Colombia from	3.9 ¢
Uruguay	7.9 ¢	Dominican Rep.	6.9 ¢
Venezuela	2.9 ¢	Mexico from	2.9 ¢

South Asia

INDIA	PAKISTAN
6.9 ¢/min	5.9 ¢/min

Bangladesh from	3.9¢
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Comment & Views

Comment

Putting love on layaway

Relating

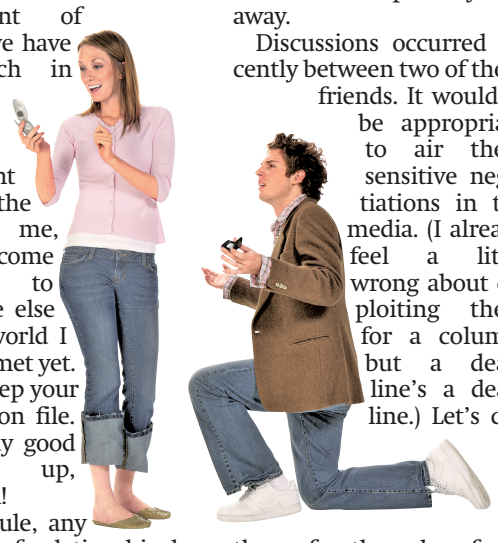
Steve Collins

metronews.ca/collins

I've always been leery of the contingency proposal, that semi-joking suggestion made, perhaps to a friend or an ex or someone else fondly regarded but deemed unfit for current consumption, "Hey, if we both turn 40 and neither of us is married, we should hook up."

Something always struck me as somewhat insulting about this arrangement, which is generally floated when 40 seems a long way off. In that distant future, the reasoning goes, the fear of dying alone might overcome the just-friends failure of chemistry, the countervailing fear of tanking a friendship or whatever else is keeping the so-called couple from coupling right now.

If it's not a left-handed compliment, it's certainly an ambidextrous one. The equivalent of saying we have so much in common that you just might just be the one for me, but you come second to everyone else in the world I haven't met yet. So I'll keep your resumé on file. If nobody good shows up, you're in!



As a rule, any wrinkle of relationship behaviour that actually appeared in an episode of Friends (as I believe this did) should be viewed with great suspicion as a stunt to be tried at home. Is not marrying really so unthinkable?

But a few friends of mine have said this to one another, however frivolously, and eventually 40 beckons from less impossibly far away.

Discussions occurred recently between two of these friends. It wouldn't be appropriate to air these sensitive negotiations in the media. (I already feel a little wrong about exploiting them for a column, but a deadline's a deadline.) Let's call them, for the sake of our continued friendship, uh, "him" and "her."

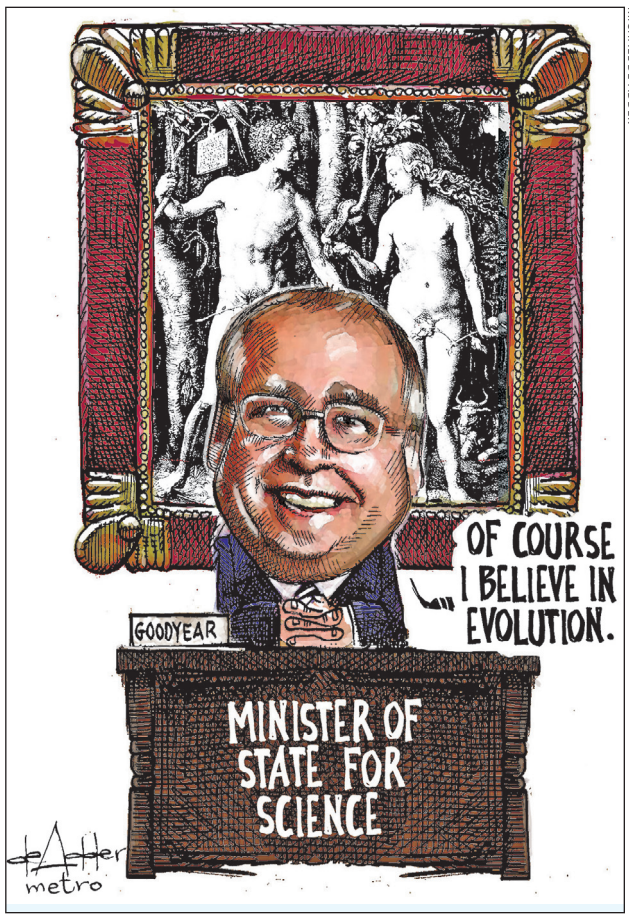
Both are successful and attractive, not obviously deformed in character or dragging any disproportionate load of disappointments. This is no nostalgic Facebook booty call from a half-remembered high school acquaintance. They just can't seem to dismiss the idea of each other as the one that maybe got away.

They've remained uncommonly close over the years, and commiserated as things didn't work out with other people. Did the constant presence of such a close, and oppositely sexed, friend play a role in all that not working out with the others? It's possible.

The irony in a relationship so much thought about and never consummated is that as years go by, it can seem a bigger and bigger deal. What was supposed to be a nice safe backup plan now seems emotionally perilous itself.

It's always going to take a leap, no matter how long you perch at the edge.

Steve Collins offers his best guesses on relationships for Metro every two weeks.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Views

Women should seize the power of choice

InStep

Christine Williams

International Women's Day fuelled countless followup discussion forums about women's liberation.

A couple of them grabbed my attention: the Vatican singling out the washing machine as the greatest liberator, and given this year's IWD anti-violence theme, the disclosure that Rihanna reunited with Chris Brown after an alleged beating. She was called a poor role model. Women face a myriad of choices and it's a great travesty when we fail to appreciate the power of choice. Ann Coulter's rendition of the single-mom curse in her latest controversial book: "Guilty" crudely highlighted this.

In it, she condemns the modern portrayal of the single unwed mother as the innocent, perennial victim, denouncing them for foisting a host of costly social ills upon society.

Although, many of Coulter's foes would take fiendish delight in imagining her burnt at the stake, there is a message to decipher in her acrid approach to confronting the poignant social malady of single motherhood: the misuse of the power of choice.

The choices North American women have today came at great toil and we have reason to celebrate the history of our sisterhood. Women were key players in the 19th century abolitionist movement. The first organizers for women's rights started by working perilously with black women who had escaped slavery and wanted to learn how to read and write. Yet it was a momentous display of unity for the rights of all women. In 1848, the Declaration of Sentiments was finally ratified, proclaiming men and women to be created equal, giving women legal, social and voting rights.

We've come a long way baby, because now we can choose. Recently, I was horrified when an older lady called our talk show — On the Line — to say that she stayed with an abusive husband for decades because one church leader told her to. We delude and denigrate ourselves by allowing others to define our self worth, including celebrities like Rihanna.

Young women's role models were meant to be those of their own household. If it's a dysfunctional one, the cycle must end somewhere. There is help for those willing to reach out from beneath the veneers of pain and pretexts in a genuine search for wholeness.

No physical invention, including the washing machine — or even law — can free someone from the shackles of the mind. Such advancements however provide opportunity that we should never take for granted: the opportunity of choice.

Christine Williams is the producer and host of the live current affairs daily talk show On the Line at CTS TV in Burlington, Ont.

Quote of the Day

"We have got to be finding ways to get (handguns) off the streets, not handing them out as prizes."

— Liberal MP Mark Holland responding to the news a gun lobby dinner is raffling off tickets to win a Beretta semi-automatic handgun. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Worth Mentioning

What's blowin' in the wind?

Bob Dylan has sung about wind many times — winds of change, the "Idiot Wind," and the winds that hit heavy on the borderline.

But some of his California neighbours Tuesday were singing a new tune about what is blowin' in the wind from his Malibu toilet.

A family living near the 67-year-old folk and rock icon's house in the posh California beachside community of Malibu have complained to city officials about an outdoor portable toilet used by people on the compound.

Cindy and David Emminger say the toilet wafts fumes from waste treatment chemicals, and that the smell carried by breezes from the Pacific Ocean has made their family feel ill.

A spokesman for Dylan did not return calls on his toilet. REUTERS

Metro Online Poll Results

49% SAID YES	Now that George W. Bush is no longer president, should the protests stop? *Weigh in on today's question at metronews.ca*	51% SAID NO

It's your turn to tell others what you think. Email your thoughts and opinions to: vancouverletters@metronews.ca
Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

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AIG weighing sale of Manhattan headquarters
A spokesman for American International Group Inc. says the company is considering the sale of its downtown Manhattan headquarters "to maximize operating efficiency." REUTERS

Business

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EDITOR: FERMIN.DESOUZA@METRONEWS.CA

CBC approves budget

Layoffs, asset sales still possible with decline in ad revenue

Asset sales and layoffs are still on the table at the CBC after the public broadcaster's board of directors approved its budget for the next 12 months, a CBC spokesman said yesterday.

Spokesman Marco Dube wouldn't comment further, but added that the broadcaster plans to make a more detailed announcement to its employees before the end of the month.

The CBC, like other media companies, has struggled with a sharp drop in advertising revenue as the recession forces marketers to slash spending.

To cope with the weak ad market, the CBC is looking at a wide swath of options, from selling radio and television assets to adding more American TV programming to its schedule and consolidating local stations.

"Asset sales are still on the table," Dube said, adding that any such move would require the approval of the federal government.

Airing ads on the CBC's radio services is not being considered, Dube said.

Layoffs are expected to be part of any cost-cutting plan at the CBC. Dube said the broadcaster is facing decisions that "will affect our services, our programs and our people."

REUTERS

Numbers

- The CBC receives more than $1 billion in government funding a year. Aside from this, the CBC generates about $600 million a year in revenue from commercial activities, including $340 million from advertising.

In brief

DISPUTE Lions Gate Entertainment Corp.'s largest investor, Mark Rachesky, has thrown his support behind the film and television studio as it tries to fend off advances from another shareholder, Carl Icahn, who has criticized the studio's high expenses and threatened to mount a proxy battle.

TRADE China complained at a World Trade Organization meeting yesterday about India's ban on toy imports from China. India has said it has health and safety concerns about the products.

CLOSING Magna International Inc. said yesterday it will close its Syracuse, N.Y., gear-assembly plant after workers there rejected a modified contract agreement that the company said it needed to make the facility competitive.

REUTERS

Madoff accountant charged

WALL STREET An accountant for confessed swindler Bernard Madoff's firm was charged with fraud yesterday after authorities said he pretended to audit the company that cheated thousands in Wall Street's biggest investment scheme.

The accountant, David Friehling, 49, who ran a small storefront firm in a New York suburb, is the first person besides Madoff to be arrested on criminal charges in the fraud.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filed civil charges against Friehling, saying that he and his firm "did not perform anything remotely resembling an audit" of Madoff's money-management firm or try to confirm that stocks that Madoff had purportedly bought for customers even existed.

Friehling faces a maximum of 105 years in prison on the criminal charges, including securities fraud, aiding and abetting investment adviser fraud, and false audit reports.

REUTERS

LUCAS JACKSON/REUTERS

David Friehling, centre, an accountant with ties to disgraced financier Bernard Madoff, leaves the Manhattan federal courthouse in New York yesterday.

IBM reportedly in talks to buy Sun Microsystems

TECH IBM is in talks to buy Sun Microsystems Inc., sources with knowledge of the matter said, a move that could bolster the technology giant against rivals in the high-end computer server and software markets.

IBM is offering to pay over $6.5 billion US, between $10 and $11 a share, the Wall Street Journal reported in its online edition.

Such a deal would be IBM's largest-ever acquisition, and lead to the creation of a massive technology firm offering both computer hardware, software and services.

Analysts saw the move as part of a consolidation trend as Hewlett-Packard Co., IBM and Cisco Systems Inc. jostle for control of corporate data centres and compete to supply the high-end computers that power complex corporate transactions and networks.

"The good players with good technology and products will eventually get taken out by the bigger guys who have the means to do it."
Zach Rosenstock, analyst

"My feeling is that the good players with good technology and products will eventually get taken out by the bigger guys who have the means to do it and understand that it's easier to buy them than to mimic them through internal development," said Zach Rosenstock, analyst at Wayne Hummer Wealth Management.

REUTERS

Starbucks on track with savings

TRADE Starbucks Corp. is on track to hit its target of $500 million US in cost savings this fiscal year as it closes stores and sheds staff, its chief executive said at the annual shareholder meeting of the giant coffee chain.

The company is also seeing signs of success in its attempts to adapt to the tough economy as it rolls out cheap breakfast food and drink combos and a new line of instant coffee.

Sliding shares

- Starbucks shares have lost more than 70 per cent of their value from 2006 highs, hurt by the declining economy.

Starbucks, which has more than 16,000 stores worldwide, is closing more than 900 of them and shedding up to 6,000 in-store staff.

REUTERS

Interest rates/Savings accounts
METRO NEWS SERVICES

BMO	CIBC	HSBC	ICICI	ING	PCF	RBC	Scotia	TD
1.75%	0.2%	2.0%	2.5%	2.0%	1.65%	1.75%	1.75%	0.05%

Note: Please check bank websites as some rates require a minimum account balance.

Your Money

EDITOR: NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

Test yourself on debit card safety

March is Fraud Prevention Month, a national awareness program that informs Canadians about the dangers of fraud and how to prevent it. Interac Association, Canada's national debit network, wants to know how fraud savvy you are when it comes to debit cards. Take the challenge!

1. True or False?

Debit card skimming is the method that fraudsters use to copy your magnetic stripe information and PIN which is then used to reproduce a counterfeit card and steal money from your bank account.

Response: True. Fraudsters use hidden equipment such as pinhole cameras and card reading devices to obtain your magnetic stripe information and PIN.

2. True or False?

Shielding my PIN with my hand or body and checking my statements regularly is the best way to protect myself against debit card fraud.

Fraud Prevention Month

Response: True. Shielding your PIN is the best way to protect yourself, because without the PIN — the key security feature — a fraudster will have more difficulty accessing your bank account. If you detect anything unusual on your financial statements, contact your financial institution immediately.

3. True or False?

It is OK to share my PIN with family members.

Response: False. Your PIN is the key security feature. Only you should know your PIN. Never disclose your PIN to anyone, not even friends or family and if you suspect somebody knows your PIN, change it immediately.

4. True or False?

I don't need to shield my PIN because fraudsters can't access my bank account if they don't have my debit card.

Even without your actual card, fraudsters can still access your account as long as they have your PIN number.

Response: False. Fraudsters use hidden equipment such as pinhole cameras and card reading devices to obtain your magnetic stripe information and PIN, which is then encoded onto a counterfeit card and used to withdraw your funds without your knowledge. Shielding your PIN during every transaction will make it more difficult for a fraudster to capture your PIN, and without it, they will not be able to steal money from your bank account.

5. True or False?

If I am a victim of debit card fraud, I will be reimbursed by my financial institution.

Response: True. Cardholders are protected by the Canadian Code of Practice for Consumer Debit Card Services, under which victims of debit card fraud will be reimbursed.

6. True or False?

A chip card is a payment card embedded with a microchip that will provide increased security against card skimming.

Response: True. A chip card is a new generation of payment card technology that will put the power of a computer onto the debit card and provide increased protection against debit card skimming. Chip cards have started to roll out nationally, and by 2010, the majority of Canadians will be able to benefit from the new technology.

More information about debit card safety and chip card technology is available online at interac.ca.

NEWS CANADA

Who they are

In these economic times investors should be aware that fraudsters can come in all shapes and sizes. Who commits fraud? What characteristics should you look for?

- In Canada, almost three out of four fraudsters were men.
- Most commonly, they have been with their employer for 3-5 years.
- Sixty-nine per cent of fraudsters were between the ages of 30 and 49.
- All of this is according to the latest study by KPMG entitled Profile of a Canadian Fraudster.
- The survey polled senior executives such as CFOs and Vice-Presidents from across Canada and covered a wide range of industries, including Financial Services, Energy and Natural Resources, Consumer Markets, and Industrial Markets.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Countries of the worldwide francophone community make up one-third of the member states of the United Nations. Our francophone community in British Columbia is rich in different forms of knowledge, of business, of culture and entertainment, and in contributions to fields as diverse as government, health, education and sports.

We're a community that adds many threads to British Columbia's social fabric. We've come from around the world to make our way in the world. Here. In British Columbia.

Coming from around the world works for B.C.

A TOAST?

Perhaps it's time to raise a timely glass in honour of French Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who founded the modern Olympic movement in 1896. But we're not sure even he could have imagined the kind of movement that's going to be heading to Vancouver in 2010.

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Cubs to honour Jenkins, Maddux
The Chicago Cubs will honour Ferguson Jenkins and Greg Maddux by retiring the No. 31 jersey worn by the two pitchers, the Major League Baseball club announced. Both Jenkins and Maddux claimed Cy Young honours for the Cubs. REUTERS

Sports

Heart surgery for Astro

Aaron Boone of the Houston Astros will soon have heart surgery that could end his career, the veteran infielder said yesterday. "I have been diagnosed as having a heart condition involving the aorta and aortic valve," Boone told reporters at the Astros' spring training complex in Kissimmee, Fla. REUTERS

EDITOR: JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Tonight

VS

7 p.m.
Sportsnet/TEAM 1040

The Canucks aim to make the Blues part of a franchise-record winning streak tonight at the Garage. Vancouver has won ten straight games on home ice after losing the previous nine, but the Canucks have yet to beat the Blues at GM Place this season. The season series is tied at one win apiece, with both clubs winning 6-4 in the other's building.

ADDING UP: Willie Mitchell isn't one to cite individual statistics, but the stay-at-home defenceman's +28 rating is tied for seventh in the NHL.

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sp: metro Photo by: John Kamitakahara

Missing the Madness

Injury keeps North Vancouver's Robert Sacre off the court

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

It's the most exciting time of the year in NCAA basketball — and Robert Sacre is on the outside looking in.

Sacre, a seven-footer from North Vancouver and one of Canada's top basketball prospects, has been ruled out for the rest of Gonzaga's season with a broken foot, ending a nightmarish sophomore campaign that lasted just five games.

Instead of being in the heat of the action, Sacre will be in street clothes while the NCAA 12th-ranked Bulldogs (26-5) face the Akron Zips (23-12) today.

"It's very frustrating, but you just have to accept it and deal with it," said Sacre, who will gain a season of eligibility because of medical redshirt rules. "I'll cheer as much as I possibly (can) on the sidelines. That's all I can do, so why not?"

Sacre actually broke his foot twice this season. He suffered the initial break before the season started and didn't get back into the lineup until late November, then landed awkwardly on the healed foot five games into his comeback on Dec. 10. He called it a "freak accident."

JIM ROGASH/GETTY IMAGES

Robert Sacre, seen here playing for the Gonzaga Bulldogs in 2007, will be unable to play in the NCAA Tournament.

"It was really hard for me," Sacre said. "Especially because when I came down the second time, I just knew it was a break. That was the hardest part. But you just have to accept it. Things happen and you can't blame anyone for it."

Sacre, who was a starter in last year's opening-round loss to Davidson in the NCAA Tournament, remains one of the most highly touted big men to come out of Canada in years and will look to get his career back on track in the fall.

He averaged 2.8 points and 1.8 rebounds as a freshman.

"I need to work on my inside game, my rebounding and my defence," he said. "I know what I need to work on and I'll just focus on that and perfect those skills."

With Sacre on the sidelines, Gonzaga is still considered a threat to do damage at the NCAA Tournament. The Bulldogs struggled in recent years, advancing beyond the first weekend just once in the past seven seasons. Sacre has high hopes.

"We've had our ups and downs, but we're looking good," Sacre said. "You just have to play as hard as you can and see what happens."

Soccer snobs should give MLS a chance

ToulBox

Scott Rintoul

metronews.ca/toulbox

Given the trials and tribulations the franchise has endured over the past twenty years, the Whitecaps are well aware that bringing Major League Soccer to the Lower Mainland is nothing compared to making it work.

If ownership is any indication, the operation should be extremely successful. Greg Kerfoot made a mint in software before purchasing the 'Caps. Jeff Mallett is the former chief operating officer of Yahoo Inc. and current co-owner of the San Francisco Giants. Steve Luzco is a partial owner of the Boston Celtics, and you may have heard of the other partner, Steve Nash. Not only have they all excelled in their individual professions, they are all extremely passionate about growing soccer in both B.C. and Canada.

That zeal will translate into a quality product on the field, but all involved realize that results are only half the battle when it comes to selling soccer in North America.

The accompanying atmosphere must be even more entertaining than the game itself in order to convert those unfamiliar with the most popular game on the planet.

But for this venture to really take hold in Vancouver, conversion is not the answer: It is the passion of those who vigorously defend the beautiful game that the organization must tap into.

For whatever reason, a mentality of superiority has infiltrated a certain percentage of ardent soccer fans in Vancouver. Such people refuse to support the local product because it is not the highest level of the game on the planet.

These soccer snobs are constantly dismissing both the USL and the MLS for the simple fact that neither is the English Premier League nor the European Champions League.

That's like hockey fans in Winnipeg boycotting the Manitoba Moose because they don't play in the NHL.

The fact of the matter is Vancouver has been invited to play in the top league on this continent.

Yesterday's announcement will bring a better brand of soccer to this city than that which previously existed, and bigger international matches are guaranteed to follow. If those in this region who claim to love soccer actually prove it with their actions, the Whitecaps are set to embark on a long and healthy existence in the MLS.

Scott Rintoul is a college athlete, sports fan and broadcaster. He can be heard Monday-Friday on the TEAM 1040 from 6-9 a.m. scott.rintoul@team1040.ca.

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Metro Homes

Spring BBQ tips

Give your grill a spring cleaning with a brass wire brush, dish soap, spatula, stainless steel cleaner and some fine sandpaper; do a complete leak test of the grill and check all ignition parts. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

Managing landing strip no easy task

UrbanDweller

Carlyn Yandle

metronews.ca/urbandweller

CARLYN YANDLE PHOTO

This townhouse kitchen was extended to the rear entry with the addition of a series of white Ikea wardrobes that hold recycling, outerwear, tools and shoes. The fridge was relocated closer to the entry, and a run of counter installed for incoming grocery bags.

"I blame this general lack of organization on the mostly-male architects and contractors. If women designed homes, they'd put a lot of thought into setting up the high-traffic entryway."

The latest gotta-have-it features in dream homes go in and out of style like clothing. The extra-large jet tub has been replaced by the extra-large walk-in shower with glass doors and raindrop shower head. The conversation pit is now a home theatre.

Despite all the latest luxuries, I've yet to come across a home that has the one feature that would have me at 'hello': A well-designed plan. Ideally it would be able to handle the incoming — groceries, mail, outerwear and footwear, pet leashes, backpacks — and the outgoing — recycling, trash, goodwill items.

I blame this general lack of organization on the mostly-male architects and contractors. If women designed homes, they'd put a lot of thought into setting up the high-traffic entryway as a first-line stuff-sorting station within close proximity to the fridge and cupboards. This would go a long way to stop the pile-ups of groceries, paper and clothing before they get started. The kitchen counters would remain clear of clutter. The dining table just might get used for its intended purpose.

Whether it's a 600-square-foot condo or a 6,000-square-foot mansion, every home could use something beyond the typical coat closet at the usual point of entry, so this area requires a little forethought after-the-fact. Installing a couple of attractive wardrobes near the entrance is a good start. A bench, for sitting while putting on or taking off shoes, is an important addition, especially if it's a flip-top seat for storage, as is a mirror above for final wardrobe checks before heading outside.

But really, a truly efficient entry would also include a run of countertop above a cabinet, with a slot in the counter for feeding those pre-approved credit apps into a concealed paper shredder. A paper-recycling bin would live in a lower, pull-out shelf for easy removal.

A series of cubbies for each family member would be placed at an accessible level nearby for fast sorting, and a corkboard inset just above the counter would hold important family reminders. Beyond this paper-processing station would be a series of sturdy, sculpturally attractive wall hooks for bags and purses, followed by the coat closet with plenty of room for hanging shoe bags.

It's a nice dream, and anyone living in under 1,000 square feet likely wouldn't want to squander precious floor space for this convenience, but setting up even a small sorting/storing space near the entry pays back in the form of peace of mind.

Carlyn Yandle is a Vancouver journalist with her own room-planning business, Home Reworks; carlyn@homereworks.com.

Overseas sales a tricky business

HouseLeague

Ryan DeLuca

metronews.ca/houseleague

Vancouver is considered one of the most beautiful and most liveable cities in the world. It is no wonder that many of the buyers we encounter daily in the real estate market are from overseas.

So how do you ensure a smooth deal when the person who is buying your home is not around?

When dealing with out of town buyers it is important to use all the recourses at your disposal such as local realtors, lawyers and notary publics. It is guaranteed that the buyer will have a team of professionals at their disposal representing them, so you must ensure that you do as well.

If you live in a strata property, ensure that you have all your paperwork ready. Sending documents from one country to another can take time and the subject removal period can be as short as seven days. Waiting on your property manager to obtain all the documents can put your deal in jeopardy. Instead, make sure you or your realtor order all the necessary documents the minute you list the property. That way they are ready to ship when you need them.

Confirming the identity of any buyer is a tricky task but when the buyer lives in a foreign country and you do not even get to meet them it can be a bit daunting. Luckily, the federal government has come out with a new Fintrac form that makes it easy for your realtor to collect identity information helping to ensure the buyer is who he or she claims to be. Your realtor will obtain these forms for the buyer to fill out.

Finally, ensure that your contract is filled out clearly and completely. It is not as easy to get missing signatures and initials when the buyer is in a different time zone. Missing pages and signatures can cost a deal when it requires days to transfer paperwork back and forth. Comb your contract carefully and ensure that you have completed all the necessary steps.

Ryan DeLuca is a realtor with Sotheby's International Realty Canada, and host of The Real Estate Minute on Novus TV; rdeluca@sothebysrealty.ca.

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Dolce & Gabbana make-up
Italian designer duo Dolce & Gabbana, among Milan's top fashion names, are branching out from dresses to lipsticks, launching a make-up line they say they have been dreaming of for years. REUTERS

Style

Jacobs leads CFDA noms

June 15 could end up being a big night for Marc Jacobs, judging by the number of Council of Fashion Designers of America awards he's up for that night. He's up against Narciso Rodriguez and Rodarte's Kate and Laura Mulleavy for the Women's wear Designer of the Year prize in addition to his nomination for Accessory Designer of the Year. He'll also be honored with the International Award for his track record at Louis Vuitton. KENYA HUNT/METRO WORLD NEWS

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Guys still call the shots in fashion

Canada's top designers 'a band of brothers'

Why do most of Canada's top designers pee standing up? The answer is obvious — because they're men.

It was hard not to notice at a Holt Renfrew event this week designed specifically to showcase the best in Canadian fashion design that, apart from the models, there wasn't a woman among them.

The retailer's vaunted group of six included Montrealer Denis Gagnon, rising star Jeremy Laing, workaholic Mikhael Kale, menswear dynamo Philip Sparks and the creative duo behind Greta Constantine — Kirk Pickersgill and Stephen Wong. The event was meant to kick off Toronto Fashion Week, where, incidentally, just a third of designers showing are women. Even Holts' boys club is bewildered by the dearth of female talent.

"We were just saying, 'Oh my God, we're all boys!'" Kale notes. "It's like the band of brothers, you know."

Kale, who says he works on three and a half hours of sleep a night, notes he has few responsibilities outside of his sewing studio, which is where he lives. He's not married and does not own a pet.

"No spouse, no kids, no time!" he says. "Have you seen the garments? The detail is insane!"

So what do these successful, youngish men possess that their female counterparts lack?

"Not to be mean, but, we want more," says Pickersgill, a fan of 18-hour days. "That group of us, we all thrive outside of Toronto. We want to be with the big boys."

Veteran David Dixon, who's designed a collection of women's clothing inspired by Barbie for the Bay, offers another theory.

"The approach is different, I think, between male and female designers," he says. "A lot of my female contemporaries who are designing clothes, they're sort of their own muse. It becomes a bit more centralized around who they are as opposed to a larger audience."

"A lot of my female contemporaries who are designing clothes, they're sort of their own muse. It becomes a bit more centralized around who they are as opposed to a larger audience."
Designer David Dixon

For an industry so stereotypically feminine, it seems surprisingly sexist.

Designer Judy Cornish, who created the successful label Comrags 25 years ago with Joyce Gunhouse, has her suspicions.

"Is there a bias in the business community about who can go the distance?" Cornish wonders. "If you're going to back someone, are you going to back someone who's going to have children, bow out and quit?"

During the '90s, Comrags became very big, very fast.

"We were selling all over the U.S., a little bit in Europe, in Asia," Cornish says. "We had an opportunity in the U.S. that we passed up because we had young kids."

They decided to shrink the business to retain creative control.

"We found that the larger we got, the more difficult the business side became. You've got one person saying, `I can sell this skirt if it's two inches shorter.' Someone else is saying, `I can sell it if it doesn't have a dart in it.' And then you start to think too much about what you do. You start to second-guess."

So does it really come down to maternal clocks and who functions best when sleep-deprived?

Jeremy Laing, who designs for princesses in Saudi Arabia, professionals in Hong Kong and girls in Dallas, doesn't think so. He has a spouse and a pet.

For him, success is knowing what sells. "I try to think of a lot of different kinds of women in a lot of different kinds of places to make sure that I'm not sacrificing accessibility for a kind of gay runway fantasy," he says. "Now, especially with the dictates of the economy, is not the time for that."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

VINCE TALOTTA/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Clockwise from top left: designers Kirk Pickersgill, Mikhael Kale, Stephen Wong, Philip Sparks, Jeremy Laing and Denis Gagnon.

Dress for recession success

CLOTHING It's tricky to know what to wear in a recession if you are job-hunting, but the advice from professionals is to play it safe and formal.

In boom times, wearing casual or quirky clothes to an interview could suggest a free-thinking, risk-taker.

But when risk-taking has a got bad name and jobs are scarce it's better to turn up in a plain, dark suit and white shirt if you are a man and a sober skirt, jacket and blouse if you are a woman, say image consultants.

"What people don't want now is 'different', they want what they know," said Sandy Ruddock, founder of image consultants Public i.

REUTERS

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Left: A strapless pink dress from the Barbie by David Dixon collection.

All dolled up for the runway

FASHION WEEK Toronto, Ont., designer David Dixon opened Toronto Fashion Week earlier this week with a preview of his own signature line for fall, followed by a 40-piece Barbie by David Dixon collection that is now on display at Toronto's downtown flagship Bay store.

"These are clothes Barbie would wear today," says the Bay's chief executive officer Bonnie Brooks of the collection that opened with a cool pink empire coat and went on to include suits and sharp cocktail dresses.

Dixon's Barbie collection included black and white houndstooth dresses that commanded a figure like Barbie's to carry off. There were pant suits with nipped, peplum jackets and cropped pants.

"It is a complete collection from day to night," says Dixon, confident the line will perform well on the sales floor. "Consumers will take it seriously," he says.

Every piece, he insists, is intended for the modern, grown-up fashion consumer — real women who need a smart suit for a job interview or for a chic cocktail party.

"The clothes will have real nostalgic value," says Dixon, noting that similar Barbie-fashion collaborations are being forged around the world. Sex and the City costume designer Patricia Field is doing something similar in New York. And Jeremy Scott has created a line for the popular Collette concept store in Paris.

The limited-edition collection will be available for sale in September. It combines contemporary and modern materials in black, ivory and pink, and will retail for between $300 and $1,100.

Toronto Fashion Week continues until Saturday.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Kenya's**Style**
Kenya Hunt

Read the blog at metronews.ca/kenyasstyle

Modelling for heart health
Models in this year's Toronto Heart Truth fashion show included Natalie Brown, Sass Jordan, Arisa Cox, Amy Sky and Kreesha Turner. METRO

The biggest fashion trends of fall '09

KENYA HUNT
Metro World News

1 THIGH HIGH BOOTS
These were everywhere, adding a bit of sex (always a big seller) to fall: Louis Vuitton, Stella McCartney, Roberto Cavalli, Chloe, Prada, Rodarte, Gucci, and the list goes on and on.

2 FUR
Not sure how PETA let this happen, but animal skin will be all the rage for autumn. It came in electric colors at Thakoon and Dolce & Gabbana, and in oversized proportions at Burberry and Matthew Williamson, just to name a few examples.

3 THE POWER SUIT
As more women think about job interviews in the face of layoffs or returning to work after a life of leisure, designers from Donna Karan to Alber Elbaz aimed to provide them with the wardrobe items they'll need.

FlareFashion

Lisa Tant
Read the blog at metronews.ca/flarefashion

Laureen Harper at this week's Toronto Fashion Week.

Bottoms up to fashion

Mrs. Harper gets mooned by model at Heart Truth show

The tiny butch cop from Corner Gas mooned the prime minister's wife earlier this week in a historic moment for Canadians.

"I'm so excited!" Laureen Harper exclaimed. "It's my first (Toronto) fashion show."

Wearing a Sunny Choi pantsuit and bright red lipstick, Harper joined hundreds of other stylish guests at LG Fashion Week for theHeart Truth Fashion Show, sponsored by the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada and the Canadian fashion industry.

The event which featured 20 celebrity "models" wearing red dresses by Canada's top designers.

But it was the actress Tara Spencer-Nairn who may have made the biggest impression of the night.

Skipping down the runway in a flirty, peasant-style frock by Damzels in this Dress, Spencer-Nairn struck a pose that left little to the imagination.

Her decision to wear racy black bloomers with her garter-belt stockings was last minute.

"I said, `I'm gonna bring the bloomers just in case I fall because I don't want to, you know, scare anybody with a bare bottom,'" Spencer-Nairn explained during a private reception after the show.

The decision to moon the audience came on a dare from her fellow models, including the comedian Jessica Holmes, former Olympic figure skater Elizabeth Manley, radio personality Marilyn Denis and the actress Sitara Hewitt of Little Mosque on the Prairie, who came a close second for sexiest performance of the night as she shimmied down the catwalk in a blazing minidress by Lucian Matis with a back slit that stopped just shy of her derriere.

"Everyone started egging me on," she says. "It became almost a 'Will she or won't she do it?' And in those situations, I generally do it."

Did Spencer-Nairn know Harper would be in the front row?

You bet she did. Spencer-Nairn shook her hand before the lights went down.

"Awww, come on! It doesn't matter who's in the audience," she says. "I'm still going to have fun. It was for such a great, great cause.

"Prime minister's wife or no prime minister's wife, you're gonna see my booty."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICEPHOTOS

Actress Tara Spencer-Nairn showed off more than expected at Toronto Fashion Week.

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Tune in tonight

A new documentary series airing on CBC Television, The Great Food Revolution: A Citizen's Guide to Eating in the 21st Century, takes viewers on a gastronomic journey and explores how we have transformed the way we eat, drink and think about food. The four-part series beings tonight at 8 p.m. (8:30 NT). METRO NEWS SERVICES

Food

For healthy baking, add dried fruit, such as dates, figs, dried cranberries, apricots, and raisins to increase the fibre content.

BARB HOLLAND/FOR METRO CANADA

Sweet

At the same time, use these fruits' natural sweetness to replace some of the sugar in a recipe.

EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

Muffins with lighter stuffin'

À la carte

Barb Holland

metronews.ca/alacarte

Healthy baking is possible. Here is one of my favourite muffin recipes, along with some tips to increase fibre, reduce fat and calories. Not to mention, enjoy fresh home-baked flavour and freshness.

Alter your favourite muffin recipes to make them lower in fat and higher in fibre to enjoy these guilt-free treats.

Orange Date Muffins

These are loaded with fibre and they taste good too. Look for soft-pitted dates in the produce section rather than the firm pressed dates in the baking aisle. If buttermilk is not something you use regularly, freeze remaining in measured amounts for future recipes. The texture may change in freezing and thawing, but it is fine for baking. Makes 12 muffins.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1-1/2 cups (375 ml) whole-wheat flour
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) brown sugar
- 1-1/2 tsp (7 ml) baking powder
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) baking soda
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) salt
- 1 orange, with peel, cut into pieces (remove seeds)
- 1 cup (250 ml) pitted dates
- 3/4 cup (175 ml) buttermilk
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) canola oil
- 1 egg

METHOD:

Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a muffin pan with non-stick baking cups or spray with nonstick spray.

In medium bowl, combine flour, brown sugar, baking powder, soda and salt.

Toss orange, dates, buttermilk, oil and egg in blender and process until oranges and dates are well chopped (you want some texture). Stir into dry mixture just until blended.

Scoop or spoon batter into muffins cups. Bake 18 to 20 minutes or until toothpick inserted in centre comes out clean. Cool pan on wire rack 5 minutes. Remove muffins from pan to cool completely.

Rolled oats (also called large flake or old fashioned oats) are also a good fibre addition to muffins and cookies.

Healthy Baking Tips:

- Increase the fibre and nutritional content by using whole wheat flour, which contains bran. To make it whole grain, use either stone ground whole wheat or try adding 2 tbsp (30 ml) wheat germ to each 1 cup (250 ml) of regular whole wheat flour. If adapting a favourite recipe, begin by replacing half the amount of all-purpose flour with whole wheat flour. If that works well, next time try all whole-wheat flour. Be sure to store whole-wheat flour in the freezer to prevent rancidity. Rolled oats (also called large flake or old fashioned oats) are also a good fibre addition to muffins and cookies.

- Use heart-healthy canola oil which has the least amount of saturated fat and a very mild flavour. Canola oil can be used in muffins, cakes and cookies. In a muffin recipe, reduce the amount of oil in your recipe to ¼ cup (60 ml) and use low fat ingredients such as applesauce, mashed banana, juice, yogurt, buttermilk (1%), low fat or skim milk to replace the remaining oil and liquid.

- Non-hydrogenated margarine can also be used in baking, but adjustments will be necessary if you are using it in place of butter or hard margarine. Keep in mind: Non-hydrogenated margarine (soft tub margarine) has a higher water content and can affect your baking results.

Barb Holland is a professional home economist and food writer who believes in shopping locally and in season.

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Riding the Recession

Meals for a steal

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Price: Most dishes around $11

Stepho's is well known for serving huge portions at affordable prices. All the Greek classics, including souvlaki, roast lamb, gyros, kalamari and saganaki are on the menu and done well. Great tzatziki sauce accompanies all dishes. Wine bottles start under $20. The one drawback are the long lineups, that rain or shine, form outside this eatery. However, they do move fast.

LiquidAssets

Peter Rockwell

metronews.ca/liquidassets

Spring flings

Break out the fancy stemware; tomorrow is the first day of spring so, at least according to the calendar, we can officially raise a glass to the end of winter.

For me the liquid personality of the season comes through in wines with bright, floral aromas and smooth, up-front fruit flavours. They should work with most casual menus but be able to stand alone as an upbeat palate refresher.

In whites, the juice from the viognier and torrontés grapes make for great late March drinking as does Old World riesling. The **2005 Lingenfelder Estate Bird Label Riesling ($16.98 - $18.99)** is a well-rounded sipper from Germany's Pfalz region. Distinctively off-dry, it has a universal appeal that's hard to find in any wine no matter what the colour.

Turning to reds, those from France's Beaujolais and Italy's Valpolicella regions are ideal for laidback contemplation. A great alternative are wines made with the grenache grape — especially in a blend à la Down Under. The **2007 Rosemount Estates Diamond Cellars Grenache Shiraz ($12.95 - $15.96)** is a relaxing Aussie with a flowing trail of cranberry fruit that makes you wish it was warm enough to lounge out on your back deck.

Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all provinces.

Peter Rockwell is the everyman's wine writer, working in the liquor industry for more than 25 years and travelling the globe looking for something to fill his glass and put into words.

It's here!
The 31st Annual Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival starts March 23. B.C. is this year's theme region, so don't miss out on celebrating our local growers. A few events still have tickets available, visit playhousewinefest.com for details. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Urban Foodie

●●●●● INSPIRED; ●●●● VERY GOOD; ●●● PALATABLE; ●● HO-HUM; ● NEVER AGAIN

Mon Bella reborn under new chef

ANYA LEVYKH
anya.levykh@gmail.com

Mon Bella Bistoria
1809 West 1 Ave.
Vancouver
604-569-2741
monbella.com

Signature Drink:
Vespa
Signature Dish:
Tagliatelle alla Bolognese
Rating: ●●●●
Dinner & drinks for 2: $70

I first visited Mon Bella about six months ago, shortly after they opened, and was far from being impressed. There's an old adage about steel being stronger after some time in the fire however, which seems to be the case here. A completely overhauled menu has resulted in very appealing — and wallet-friendly — dining options.

During my first run, I got some lovely cured slices of wild salmon with a glass of French Gris ($8 for the combo). Our $20 prix fixe included seared salmon over parsley crème fraîche, fork-tender beef short rib, with mashed potatoes and local baby carrots, and chocolate mousse in butter pastry with strawberries and crème anglais.

On the web

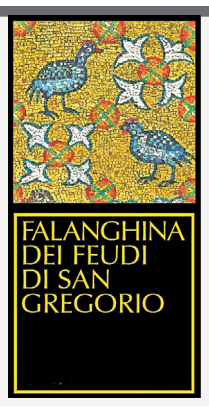
- Read the full article online at metronews.ca/vancouver/columnist/40411.
- Chew more on Anya's blog at metronews.ca/vancouver/blog/136310.

On a second visit, we had local buffalo mozzarella and perfect al dente spaghetti, tossed in olive oil, toasted garlic and parsley. My friend went for the chicken fricassee for his final course, while my Berkshire pulled pork was very tender, albeit slightly plain, with delicious parsley gnocchi. We splurged and shared dessert ($9) — the chocolate mousse again. Although the $20 deal is called a "tasting" menu, we were full after three courses. There may still be some growing to do, but for Mon Bella isn't that far behind.

ANYA LEVYKH/FOR METRO VANCOUVER
Chicken fricassee with roasted garlic, thyme and späetzle.

Falanghina Flourishes in Campania

Campania, the south-western region of Italy famous for being rocked by Vesuvius and the origin of Nero's drink of choice, is not traditionally on the oenophile's map, but it should be, if only thanks to Falanghina, a native white grape that produces fairly well-bodied wines of low acidity. I recently tried Feudi di San Gregorio's 2006 version, a straw-yellow wine with lemony-apple and lime notes, beautifully balanced with an extra clean finish. BCLS $27.99.



Dining out

A TRIO OF WINE DINNERS
CRU (1459 West Broadway) is holding a trio of winery dinners. March 23, taste Pinot Noirs from around the world ($90). March 25 features local winery Stag's Hollow ($90) and March 29 highlights Le Vieux Pin and La Stella wineries ($100). Each evening includes a meal. Call 604-677-4111.

A SPONTANEOUS EVENING
Tonight at 6:30 p.m., La Terrazza (1088 Cambie St.) is presenting a last-minute wine dinner with Louis Moreau, one of the world's premier Chablis producers and sixth generation winemaker. $125 includes reception, five-course dinner with wine pairings, and a chance to meet Moreau. Call 604-899-4449.

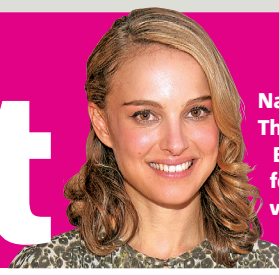
In brief

IN HONOUR of the Juno Awards taking place in Vancouver this year, VIP gift bags will contain C Restaurant's signature smoked sea salt, as well as artisanal preserves from Vista d'Oro Farms & Winery.
SOUTH OKANAGAN Wineries Association is offering a VIP prize package to whoever comes up with the best new name for its wineries. ccltd.ca/namethatwineregion

Ricci ready to marry

Christina Ricci is set to tie the knot. The actress recently became engaged to her boyfriend, actor Owen Benjamin, her rep confirmed to Us Weekly. Ricci and Benjamin have been dating publicly since November. **METRO WORLD NEWS**

Entertainment



Top choice

Natalie Portman is set to appear in Thor. She is director Kenneth Branagh's top choice to play the female lead in the upcoming Marvel blockbuster about the Norse warrior god. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

EDITOR: DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

⊕⊕⊕⊕⊕ A CLASSIC; ⊕⊕⊕⊕ EXCELLENT; ⊕⊕⊕ GOOD; ⊕⊕ FAIR; ⊕ POOR

MSTRKRFT drops new beats

MSTRKRFT

Album: Fist of God
Label: Last Gang/Universal
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕

MSTRKRFT HAVE LEARNED a thing or two since they released their 2006 debut. Most importantly, the Toronto-based dance duo ditched their obnoxious vocodor in favour of guest artists including Ghostface Killah and John Legend. Thankfully, the group retained their synth-heavy club beats and hyperactive charm, but it's still not enough to transform these guys into world class DJs. The problem lies in precisely what makes them so interesting — nearly every song works well on its own, but about halfway through the disc the frenetic keys and blistering drums get repetitive. It's a decent listen, but they're not done learning yet.

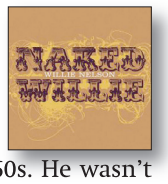
Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

LAST GANG RECORDS PHOTO

Fist of God is the latest album from Toronto dance duo MSTRKRFT.

Willie Nelson

Album: Naked Willie
Label: RCA/Sony
Rating: ⊕⊕½



OKAY, WE KNOW that Willie had some bad experiences in Nashville during the '60s. He wasn't your typical countrypolitan sort of singer. The lush orchestration and treacly background singers didn't sort his kind of music. So the idea for this album seems like a sound one — strip away all the frills from some those recordings and we'll have the Willie we've come to know and love. Well, yes and no. There are some wonderful moments here like the heartbreakers Happiness Lives Next Door, The Party's Over and I Just Dropped By. There's also his remarkable rendition of the early Kris Kristofferson masterpiece, Sunday Morning Coming Down and his unabashed protest against the Vietnam War, Jimmy's Road. But there's also the lame Where Do You Stand, the Mac-the-Knife-like Bring Me Sunshine and the ridiculous Johnny One Time. This would have been a much better album pared down from 17 to 12 tracks. If you want to hear the real "naked" Willie, search for an album called Crazy: Demo Sessions.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Attack In Black

Album: Years (by one thousand finger tips)
Label: Dinealone Records
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕

ATTACK IN BLACK'S Marriage was an album that deserved a lot more praise than it got. The Welland, Ont., band's brand of high energy guitar rock was perhaps too melodic, too catchy, to win the hearts of the in-crowd. Rightly or wrongly, Attack In Black has changed directions in its ambitious new 16-track CD, Years (by one thousand fingertips), sounding more like a Toronto alt-country band of poets than the little brothers of Alexisonfire. It's almost as if the band just discovered '70s-era Neil Young. (listen to the song Birmingham). Which, of course, is not a bad thing, especially if you have the chops to pull it off. Attack In Black definitely does. Hopefully, the band realizes that the "in-crowd" never really did matter.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

On the web

There's more online at metronews.ca/music:

- Links to this week's reviewed music

Bishop Allen

Album: GRRR...
Label: Dead Oceans
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕

IF TV AND movies have done anything lately, it's introduce the masses to great indie rock (Death Cab and OC, The Shins and Garden State). Will Brooklyn's Bishop Allen, who had a cameo in Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist, find Hollywood-initiated success? Not if their third album is any indication. While it's a pleasant indie pop listen, it's not meaty enough to resonate in a major way. That said, fans of light, infectious choruses and easy-to-sing lyrics will want to give it a spin. It's a solid summer disc, but not much more than that.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Music Reviews

music@metronews.ca

Madeleine Peyroux

Album: Bare Bones
Label: Rounder
Rating: ⊕⊕⊕⊕

MADELEINE PEYROUX'S FIRST three albums established her as some sort of second coming of Billy Holiday. And no doubt her fans would have been happy if she continued singing well-mined nuggets from the past or inspired interpretations of Leonard Cohen. But here Peyroux proves that she can also write a beautiful song — with the help of masters like Walter Becker (Steely Dan) and producer Larry Klein (Joni Mitchell). Although the music sounds familiar, it wouldn't be fair to write these 11 originals off as "more of the same." There's a depth to this songwriting that should be savoured. There are lyrical passages here on almost every song that are worthy of Cohen. And the musical accompaniment is what we've come to expect ... brilliant. Serve with candlelight and wine.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

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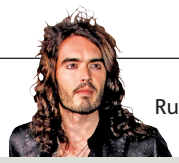


Russell's remake

Russell Brand will star with Sir Anthony Hopkins in a remake of Arthur. The comedian, 33, will play the role made famous by Dudley Moore, while Hopkins, 71, has been tipped for the role of a wise-cracking butler Hobson. FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK

JEFF ZELEVANSKY/REUTERS

Actress Natasha Richardson appears at a New York gala in this Jan. 31, 2008 file photo.

Actress dies after ski fall

ACCIDENT Award-winning actress Natasha Richardson, a member of Britain's Redgrave acting dynasty, died yesterday at age 45 after a suffering a severe injury in a skiing accident in Quebec earlier this week.

Richardson had been hospitalized in New York since Tuesday, surrounded by her husband, actor Liam Neeson, her two sons Michael, 13, and Daniel Jack, 12, and members of her immediate family.

"Liam Neeson, his sons, and the entire family are shocked and devastated by the tragic death of their beloved Natasha."
Alan Nierob, family spokesman

"Liam Neeson, his sons, and the entire family are shocked and devastated by the tragic death of their beloved Natasha. They are profoundly grateful for the support, love and prayers of everyone, and ask for privacy during this very difficult time," family spokesman Alan Nierob said in a statement.

Richardson followed her mother, Oscar winner Vanessa Redgrave, and her father, film director Tony Richardson, into a career on stage and screen in England and in the United States.

Richardson was injured Monday when she fell during a private ski lesson at the Mont Trembant resort, about 75 miles north of Montreal.

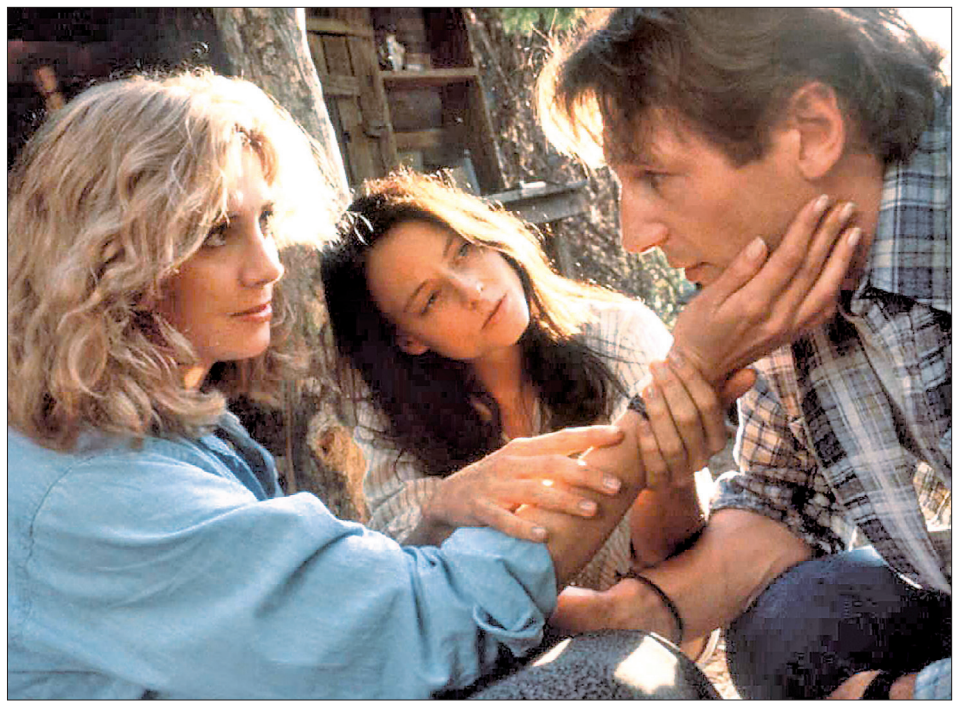
A spokeswoman for the resort said she appeared to be in good condition after the fall but her instructor called a ski patrol to take her to the bottom of the hill. About an hour later, she complained of severe headaches and was admitted to a local medical facility before eventually being transferred to New York.

Nierob's statement did not mention a cause of death.

REUTERS

Natasha Richardson's career had transcended her lineage

Family name got her foot in the door, but then her talent shone



20TH CENTURY FOX/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

From left, Natasha Richardson, Jodie Foster and Liam Neeson in a scene from Nell (1994).

When Natasha Richardson started in the acting business, it was her connection to Britain's acting dynasty, including grandfather Sir Michael Redgrave and mother Vanessa Redgrave, that put her foot in the door.

She went on to build a career in her own right, with a combination of movie and theatre roles, including a Tony-winning turn as Sally Bowles in a Broadway production of Cabaret.

"Certainly (having famous parents) opened a lot of doors when I first started out, because people were curious," said Richardson in a 1990 interview with the Toronto Star. "It never got me a job."

Richardson's famous acting family includes sister Joely (known for her role on the TV series Nip/Tuck) and aunt Lynn Redgrave.

Her father, Tony Richardson, was an Oscar-winning director who died in 1991. Her maternal grandmother Rachel Kempson and uncle Corin Redgrave were also actors.

Natasha Richardson, who died yesterday after being injured in a skiing accident at Quebec's Mont Tremblant on Monday, has also gained attention for her marriage to fellow actor Liam Neeson.

Richardson's three-year marriage to filmmaker Robert Fox ended in 1992 and she married the Irish-born Neeson in 1994. The couple has two sons.

Both Richardson and Neeson appeared in the 1994 film Nell, starring Jodie Foster, but apparently fell in love while performing together in a Broadway revival of Eugene O'Neill's Anna Christie. Richardson is a naturalized U.S. citizen.

Neeson, who was in Toronto filming Chloe, which is directed by Atom Egoyan and co-stars Julianne Moore, reportedly flew to be at his wife's side right after the accident.

Richardson trained at London's Central School of Speech and Drama and won the 1986 London Drama Critics' Most Promising Newcomer Award for her performance as Nina in The Seagull in a production that also starred her mother.

She played Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley in Ken Russell's 1986 film Gothic, but she continued to appear onstage.

She won a Tony Award for her portrayal of Sally Bowles in Cabaret in 1998, the same year she won a libel judgment against British newspapers claiming her marriage to Neeson was in trouble.

Other notable film roles include the lead in The Handmaid's Tale, based on Margaret Atwood's novel. Richardson told a Star reporter, "I felt quite close to Kate. I think she's like a lot of women. And I identified with her very strongly."

In January, Richardson and her mother played a one-night benefit concert version of A Little Night Music, at Studio 54 in New York.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

Natasha Richardson and Ralph Fiennes in The White Countess (2004).

JOAN MARCUS

Natasha Richardson, left, as Blanche DuBois with Amy Ryan as Stella Kowalski in a 2005 Broadway production of A Streetcar Named Desire.

Strike looms as Hollywood performers' unions try to negotiate commercials pact

LABOUR As if actors needed more bad news about labour talks, there's this: Leaders of the two main Hollywood performers' unions are considering sending out strike-authorization ballots unless negotiations with advertisers on a new commercials contract improve quickly.

A labour insider says representatives of the advertising industry are asking for "radical" rollbacks, including the elimination of the traditional pay structure on national broadcast commercials and caps on contributions to the unions' pension and health plans. Labor negotiators also are concerned about a proposal to extend the working day to 10 hours from eight, thus reducing overtime pay.

If strike-authorization ballots are sent out, they would be distributed jointly by the Screen Actors Guild and the smaller American Federation of Television and Radio Artists to members of both labour organizations.

The negotiating committee for the commercial talks is made up of 13 AFTRA members and 13 SAG members, seven of whom come from SAG-Hollywood.

SAG-Hollywood is dominated by the oft-militant MembershipFirst faction, which accounted for a majority of the onetime negotiating committee on SAG's long-running film and TV contract talks. That SAG committee was replaced by a task force under chief negotiator John McGuire after the dismissal of SAG executive director Doug Allen. REUTERS

Goin' to the chapel?
IIs Reese Witherspoon engaged to Jake Gyllenhaal? According to Star, Witherspoon arrived at a photo shoot wearing an engagement ring from boyfriend Gyllenhaal, but took it off shortly after she got there. **IMBD.COM**

NBC exec strikes back

Stewart's criticism of NBC coverage 'absurd': Zucker

NBC Universal Chief Executive Jeff Zucker fired back at comedian Jon Stewart yesterday, saying it was "unfair" and "absurd" for the funnyman to criticize CNBC and question its coverage of financial news.

"Everybody wants to find a scapegoat. That's human nature," Zucker said during a keynote address at a media industry conference. "But to suggest that the business media or CNBC was responsible for what is going on now is absurd."

"Just because someone who mocks authority says something doesn't make it so," Zucker said, describing the comedian's comments as "completely out of line."

Zucker's comments are the latest salvo in a war of words with Stewart, who hosts the mock news program The Daily Show with Jon Stewart on Comedy Central.

"Just because someone who mocks authority says something is so doesn't make it so."
Jeff Zucker

PHOTO CREDIT

Jon Stewart. host of The Daily Show with Jon Stewart, has criticized NBC for failing to expose problems with banks and lenders.

Stewart has blasted CNBC's reporting of the financial market meltdown, saying the channel was too cozy with corporate chiefs and key government officials.

The comedian has lobbed particularly harsh criticism at CNBC commentator Jim Cramer, and last week invited him for an appearance on his show, where he hammered the guest for his coverage of Wall Street.

"Listen, you knew what the banks were doing, yet were touting it for months and months," Stewart said to Cramer during his March 12 show. "The entire network was. Now to pretend that this was some sort of crazy, once-in-a-lifetime tsunami that nobody could have seen coming is disingenuous at best and criminal at worst."

"Listen, you knew what the banks were doing ... Now to pretend that this was some sort of crazy, once-in-a-lifetime tsunami that nobody could have seen coming is disingenuous at best and criminal at worst."
Jon Stewart

Zucker, speaking at the McGraw-Hill Media Summit in New York yesterday, said that CNBC's reporters and commentators had done a "terrific" job and the network remained a "go-to" place for financial news.

"It's unfair to CNBC and to the business media in general," Zucker said. "I don't think you can blame what happened here on the business media." **REUTERS**

DeGeneres to play 'Mother Nature' in upcoming film

MOVIES Ellen DeGeneres has signed on to play Mother Nature in an untitled comedy film being written by Sex and the City writer-executive producer Jenny Bicks.

In the Walden Media production, the Emmy-winning talk show host will return to Earth for the first time since the planet's creation. No word yet on whether Mother Nature likes to dance.

"I've always wanted to control the weather," DeGeneres said.

DeGeneres hasn't taken a live-action film role since 1999, when she appeared in EDtv and The Love Letter. She was the voice of Dory in Finding Nemo and is producing and lending her voice to Dog Show, an animation project in development at Warner Bros.

Ellen DeGeneres

Bicks has been a writer-producer on Men in Trees, Seinfeld, Naked Truth and Dawson's Creek. She co-wrote the feature What a Girl Wants and is developing Modern Love, a news series for HBO. **REUTERS**

Lucas headed to Melrose Place

TV Cloverfield star Jessica Lucas has landed a lead role on the CW's new Melrose Place.

She will play Melrose Place resident Riley Richmond, a wealthy and beautiful 24-year-old who works as an inner-city elementary school teacher. She is engaged to Jonah (Michael Rady) but has second thoughts about marrying him.

Lucas had a recurring role on the first season of CW's 90210, an update of the original Fox series that was spun off into the original Melrose Place.

Ashlee Simpson-Wentz and Katie Cassidy have also signed on to the series. **REUTERS**

Hayek headed to big screen?

CASTING Salma Hayek is in negotiations to play Adam Sandler's wife on the big screen.

In addition to Sandler, the untitled Columbia Pictures ensemble comedy stars Kevin James, Chris Rock, Rob Schneider and David Spade in a story of five best friends from high school who reunite over a holiday weekend.

Maya Rudolph, who will play Rock's wife, and Colin Quinn also are joining the project.

Dennis Dugan is directing, from a script by Sandler and Fred Wolf.

Hayek recently has been seen in a recurring role as Alec Baldwin's love interest on 30 Rock and also serves as executive producer of Ugly Betty. Her next big-screen appearance will be in Paul Weitz's Cirque du Freak. **REUTERS**

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Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
251	308	3 CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	Doc Zone (N) (CC)				CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
255	358	6 JOY	E! News	The Insider	Name Is Earl	Kath & Kim	My Fabulous Gay Wedding		ReGenesis (CC)		News (N)
254	-	8 M	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		Metropia
250	321	9 CTV	etalk (CC)	Hollywood	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		Grey's Anatomy (N) (CC)		ER "Shifting Equilibrium" (N)		News (N)
-	-	10 OMNI	The Daily	Frasier (CC)	Smallville "Turbulence" (N)		Supernatural (N) (CC)		Scrubs (CC)	Diya (CC)	New Day
252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	Bones (N) (PA) (CC)		The Office (N)	Kink in Hair	The Unit "Switchblade" (CC)		News (N)
256	389	12 VI	Instant Star	TMZ (N) (CC)	Wife Swap "Henstein/Toulou"		America's Next Top Model		(:02) Private Practice (N)		News (CC)
253	359	13 CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Ugly Betty "The Sex Issue"		30 Rock	30 Rock (N)	Hell's Kitchen (N) (PA) (CC)		The List
-	-	14 CW	Deal-No Deal	Deal-No Deal	Smallville "Turbulence" (N)		Supernatural (N) (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
289	381	15 CBS	College Basketball: NCAA Tourn. 1st Rd. -- Teams TBA				KIRO News	Entertainment	KIRO 7 Special (CC)		News (N)
287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	Name Is Earl	The Office	The Office (N)	(:31) 30 Rock	ER "Shifting Equilibrium" (N)		News (N)
602	568	19 W	Will & Grace	Friends (CC)	Divine Design	House	Confidential	House	Divine Design	Love It-List It	House
288	380	21 ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Ugly Betty "The Sex Issue"		Grey's Anatomy (N) (CC)		(:02) Private Practice (N)		KOMO 4 News
-	-	23 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	Just One of the Guys ★★ (1985, Comedy) Joyce Hyser.				King	Still Standing	Scrubs (CC)
291	383	27 PBS	Great Performances "Pavarotti: A Life in Seven Arias" (CC)				Poirot "Problem at Sea" (CC)			Victor Borge: 100 Years	
290	382	28 FOX	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Bones (N) (PA) (CC)		Hell's Kitchen (N) (PA) (CC)		News (N) (CC)		Family Guy
-	364	43 PBS	(6:30) Best of Pledge			Best of Pledge				Best of Pledge	
296	654	34 SBK	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	South Park	Cheers (CC)	Half & Half	The Insider	Entertainment	Gibbons
298	653	35 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Smallville "Turbulence" (N)		Supernatural (N) (CC)		KTLA Prime News (CC)		Friends (CC)
295	651	36 WGN	WGN News at Nine (N) (CC)		Family Guy	Two/Half Men	According-Jim	Sex and-City	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	My Wife-Kids
297	652	37 WPX	PIX News at Ten Tong. (N)		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Sex and-City	According-Jim	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Odd Couple
199	311	76 STR	News (N)	News		Janice Dickinson Modeling		Late Show-Letterman		Late Late Show	

news

Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
502	390	26 NW	Geologic Journey (CC)		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National		Geologic Journey (CC)		National
500	500	33 CNN	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)				Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		Cooper 360

sports

Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
407	419	22 RSP	NHL Hockey St. Louis Blues at Vancouver Canucks. (Subject to Blackout)					Sportsnet	Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
400	400	30 TSN	Basketball	SportsCentre (Live) (CC)			Motoring 2009	Motorcycle	2008 World Series of Poker		SportsCentre
411	457	49 OLN	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman (CC)		Mantracker "Buck & RJ"		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman
410	403	54 SCR	(6:30) College Basketball NCAA Tournament First Round -- Teams TBA. (Live)					Final Score	Final Score	Final Score	Final Score
417	406	55 SC	Bullrun (N)		American Le Mans Preview		Project LMP1: Acura		Bullrun		Bullrun
416	409	144 GLF	Extra Time	Footballers	Gol TV News	Soccer Cam	Extra Time	Footballers	Gol TV News	Gol TV News	Gol TV News

family

Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
552	543	25 YTV	True Jackson	H2O, Just Add	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	In Real Life (CC)		Falcon Beach "Turn Card"		Mystery Hnt.
555	545	50 TEL	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6TEEN	6TEEN	Futurama	Futurama: The Beast With a Billion Backs (2008) Premiere.			
557	541	51 FAM	Wizards-Place	Han. Montana	Zack & Cody	Latest Buzz	Wizards-Place	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
553	546	56 TRE	Comfy Couch	Zigby	Max & Ruby	Babar (CC)	Backyard	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch

cable variety

Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
268	354	5 KNO	Recreat. Eden	Big Ideas	Francesco's Italy: Top to Toe		Broadway: Musical		The Genius of Photography		Dublin
575	583	20 CMT	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Ult. Coyote Ugly Search		Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Reba (CC)	Reba "As Is"	Hope & Faith
570	580	24 MM	disBand	disBand	Video on Trial	Video on Trial	Springbreak.09		Video on Trial	Technical Diff.	Spotlight
600	564	25 H&G	Home to Flip	Real Renos	Holmes on Homes (CC)		The Fix (CC)	Disaster DIY	Home to Flip	Real Renos	Holmes
615	520	31 A&E	The Beast "The Walk In" (N)		The Beast "The Walk In"		The First 48 (CC)		The First 48 (CC)		The Beast
628	584	32 SPKE	(6:00) TNA iMPACT! (N) (CC)		Ways to Die	Ways to Die	MANswers	MANswers	Married... With	Married... With	MXC
521	560	34 TLC	Heli-Loggers (N) (CC)		Street Customs (CC)		Heli-Loggers (CC)		Overhaulin' (CC)		Overhaulin'
616	522	39 SHO	The Outer Limits (CC)		Love-Death	Love-Death	Trailer Park	Trailer Park	Crank ★★ (2006) Jason Statham. (CC)		
620	523	40 BVO	Mushrooms	Manitowapow	Law & Order "Genius" (CC)		Without a Trace (CC)		When Trumpets Fade ★★ (1998) Ron Eldard.		
601	562	41 SLC	X-Weighted "Kristi" (CC)		ET Canada	Til Debt-Part	Real Housewives OC		Trading Spouses		Paradise Hotel
520	505	42 DIS	MythBusters (CC)		Daily Planet (CC)		Deadliest Catch (CC)		Raging Nature (CC)		Raging Nature
522	506	44 HIS	NCIS "Vanished" (CC)		Ancient Disc.		Go Deep "Ice Wreck" (CC)		NCIS "Vanished" (CC)		Sea Hunters
627	528	45 SPC	Chuck (CC)		Stargate SG-1 "The Entity"		Star Trek: Next Gener.		Star Trek: Voyager (CC)		Star Trek: Ent.
294	650	47 TBS	Without a Paddle ★★ (2004, Comedy) Seth Green. (CC)				Sex and-City	Sex and-City	(:10) The Upside of Anger ★★★ (2005) (CC)		
619	525	48 TROP	Vanity	Inside Hollywood		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy	Married... With	Seinfeld
603	561	52 FN	Family	Glutton	Ace of Cakes	Ace of Cakes	Challenge Fruit sculptures.		Unwrapped	Secret Life of	Family
626	547	57 COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs (CC)		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	VIP	House Party	Daily Show
320	621	60 CEN	(6:30) Escape to Canada ★★		Very Young Girls ★★ (2007) Premiere. (CC)			In the Valley of Elah ★★★ (2007) Tommy Lee Jones. (CC)			
581	566	101 MTV	Taking the Stage (CC)		MTV Live	After	Making the Band 4 (CC)		Taking the Stage (CC)		MTV Live
261	394	102 V	(6:00) The Big Heat ★★ (CC)		Poltergeist: The Legacy		The Big Heat ★★ (1953) Glenn Ford, Gloria Grahame. (CC)				Paid Program
-	-	109 MUL	Eight Heroes	Mom's-Upset	Vancouver	Kahkashan	Dheeyan Ghar	Sadabahar	Desi-Mama	Desi Rhythms	Patrol World

critics'corner

Hell's Kitchen
Chef Gordon Ramsay introduces the teams to the currently hot trend of tapas (small plate) dining, then asks them to transform a day's worth of leftovers into appealing, perfectly proportioned dishes. At dinner service, however, a lack of unity on the Blue Team and a mistake by one chef that nearly sabotages both teams' performance leave Ramsay — you'd better sit down for this — absolutely furious. 9 PM on FOX

The Office
Michael (Steve Carell) makes big plans for his 15th anniversary bash at Dunder Mifflin, but he gets the wind taken out of his sails by an unexpected party pooper: the new no-nonsense vice president (Idris Elba, "The Wire"), who has some strong ideas of his own. Jim (John Krasinski) plays a prank on Dwight (Rainn Wilson) that has unexpected results. Jenna Fischer and Ed Helms co-star in the new episode "New Boss." 9 PM on NBC GTV

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Saturday Showers 60% 9° / 2°

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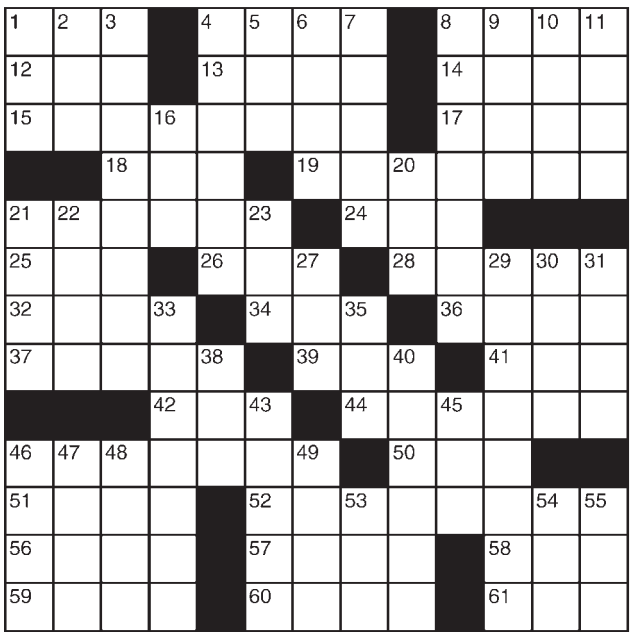

Crossword across

1 Existed
4 A bit of a shock
8 Talon
12 Inventor Whitney
13 Do as you're told
14 Timber wolf
15 Crony
17 Oft-dunked treat
18 Preceding
19 Actress' cameo role, maybe
21 Poltroon
24 Seek restitution
25 Oklahoma city
26 Round Table address
28 Cunning
32 Wire measures
34 Sailor
36 Baby carriage
37 Tea type
39 Rose, at first
41 Eggs (Pref.)
42 Started
44 Cue
46 Piano note
50 Greek consonants
51 Pennsylvania port
52 Civil War general Ambrose
56 Teri of "Tootsie"
57 Verifiable
58 Pooch
59 Picnic invaders
60 Palmist, e.g.
61 Green, in a sense

Crossword down

1 Film director Craven
2 "The Greatest"
3 Pavement
4 Wags
5 Sapporo sash
6 Walesa of Poland
7 Youngsters
8 Seal
9 Traditional tales
10 First victim
11 58-Across' comment
16 Historic time
20 Bad hairpiece
21 Too theatrical
22 Garfield's pal
23 Investigate
27 Plagiarize
29 Burr role
30 Stromboli spillage
31 Jannings of silents
33 Joins with a lead-tin alloy
35 Clear the tables
38 Conger, for one
40 Word with jacket or theatre
43 Liabilities
45 Astronaut Grissom
46 Huge, in ads
47 Persia, now
48 Gossip
49 Remedy
53 Regret
54 "What's up, —?"
55 Swelled head

Sudoku

For more/less challenging Sudoku puzzles, visit metronews.ca

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

	1			9		3	2	
	3			1	5		6	
	8	4	3			5		
1	4			5				
5	7		4		9		8	1
				3			7	5
		1			2	9	3	
	2		5	8			4	
	6	7		4			5	

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

A	I	D	■	G	U	A	M	■	T	A	F	T		
P	S	I	■	U	R	G	E	■	O	G	R	E		
E	L	S	■	F	L	E	E	T	W	O	O	D		
D	E	C	A	F	■	■	K	I	N	■	■	■		
■	■	■	F	A	R	R	■	P	I	V	O	T		
S	H	E	R	W	O	O	D	■	E	I	R	E		
H	E	X	■	S	U	M	O	S	■	N	E	E		
A	R	A	B	■	E	A	S	T	W	O	O	D		
D	E	M	O	N	■	N	E	A	R	■	■	■		
■	■	■	W	A	S	■	■	R	Y	D	E	R		
H	O	L	L	Y	W	O	O	D	■	E	A	U		
E	R	I	E	■	A	R	N	O	■	A	S	S		
N	E	E	D	■	P	O	E	M	■	L	E	T		

5	9	6	1	4	2	3	7	8
1	7	8	5	6	3	4	2	9
2	4	3	8	9	7	5	1	6
6	5	9	2	3	4	1	8	7
4	8	2	6	7	1	9	3	5
7	3	1	9	8	5	6	4	2
3	2	5	7	1	9	8	6	4
9	6	4	3	2	8	7	5	1
8	1	7	4	5	6	2	9	3

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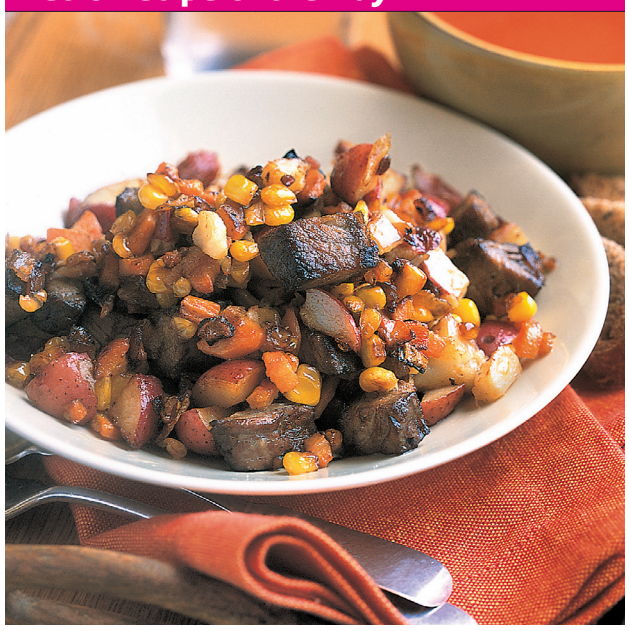
SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day



Roast Beef Hash

INGREDIENTS:
1 lb (500 g) small red-skinned potatoes, cut into 1/4-in. (0.5 –cm) dice
2 carrots, quartered lengthwise and thinly sliced
1 tbsp (15 ml) plus 2 tsp (10 ml) olive oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 1/4 cups (300 ml) frozen corn
3/4 tsp (4 ml) salt
1/4 tsp (6 ml) black pepper
6 oz (175 g) cooked roast beef, cut into 1/3-in. (1-cm) dice

METHOD:
1. Cook potatoes in medium pot of boiling water until almost tender, about 6 minutes. Add carrots and cook 2 minutes longer. Drain.
2. Spray large nonstick skillet with nonstick cooking spray. Add 1 tbsp (15 ml) oil and heat over medium-low heat. Add onion and garlic to skillet and cook, stirring frequently, until onion is golden brown, about 7 minutes.
3. Increase heat to medium-high. Add remaining 2 tsp (10 ml) oil. Add potatoes and carrots, corn, salt and black pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until mixture starts to form a crust, about 10 minutes.
4. Stir in beef and press down on mixture to help form a crust. Cook until crusty on bottom, about 5 minutes.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
You've made an error in judgment. An executive doesn't speak your language. An odd couple talks about changing the world.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Keep track of an amusing competition. Money can be earned the easy way. Make a grab at a big and risky chance.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Cheer up by discussing the dating game. Remarkable pleasure creates a wild diversion. A flaky parent stumbles onto a solution.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
A conversation eases the pain of unrequited love. An uncommon man shifts gears while debating. You will accomplish great things.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
A prudish woman questions your preferences. A nearby object has a strange effect. A guilty person needs medical attention.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
A project is suspended by a worried person. The wrong guy is asked to make a job change. More adventures are coming soon.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Spiteful feelings make for an uncomfortable meeting. Your strategy is a controversial topic. Controlling your feelings leads to wonderful news.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
A man has a chip on his shoulder. A friend faces a long-awaited response. Some errors are made in good faith.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
A loved one's exhaustion will lift. A walk will do wonders for a caring person. Having second thoughts promises a fresh start.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
The arrival of a risk-taking friend causes confusion. Whiny people will avoid doing chores. Helping someone out will bring you a windfall.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Exhilarating prospects are notable for their thrills. An angry man is forced to have some fun. Some secrets are revealed due to a scandal.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
A man talks of a viable scheme. You'll get frustrated while on the phone. Be yielding but keep your mind clear.

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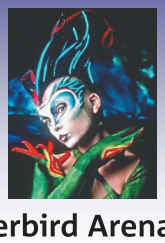

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SHOPPERS DRUG MART

Lucky Lange

Jessica Lange was extremely lucky yesterday after taking a fall at her Minnesota cabin. Family sources tell TMZ the actress grabbed for a railing that was not secure, and fell over breaking her shoulder and collarbone and dislocating her arm. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Celebrity Buzz

Skin caught in between?

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Charitable Britney fears death threats

PEOPLE Britney Spears — who performs her second show in Toronto tonight — is planning to visit sick children when her tour comes to London, England, in June, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The singer was so moved by her visit to Miami Children's Hospital earlier this month she has decided to repeat the experience at Britain's Great Ormond Street hospital.

A source said: "She would really like to do this. In Miami she met up with 40 kids and posed for pictures with them.

"She found it really moving that just a couple of minutes with the children could mean so much to them."

The 27-year-old star is due to bring her Circus tour — which kicked off in New Orleans two weeks ago — to London's O2 arena in two months, but is already threatening to cancel her remaining shows after receiving death threats.

The website says Spears is reportedly worried the lives of her sons Sean Preston, three, and Jayden James, two, could be in danger following the menacing messages.

A source said: "Britney received some anonymous death threats over the phone and in the mail, and her worst fear is a kidnap plot against Sean or Jayden. She's been having terrible nightmares ever since then and she wakes up in the middle of the night crying out for her boys.

"She told her head of security and he thinks it's a lone stalker. Her paranoia has reached fever pitch and she's wracked with fear," femalefirst.co.uk quotes the source as saying.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

GETTY IMAGES

Sarah goes psychic?

PEOPLE Sarah Jessica Parker hopes visits to a psychic will improve her marriage, according to Grazia magazine.

The Sex and the City star has reportedly been shelling out $105 per visit to Psychic Serena to heal the bond with husband Matthew Broderick after claims he was unfaithful.

"It's all about working on their positive energy as a couple and making the right decisions based on what Serena advises," a source says.

But it looks like Broderick isn't exactly on the same page. "Sarah Jessica is open-minded about seeing a psychic, but she doesn't take Matthew along with her. He just doesn't seem to take it seriously."

METRO WORLD NEWS

Jacko set for world tour?

CAREER After all 50 of his scheduled London shows this summer exceeded expectations and sold out in a matter of hours, Michael Jackson is reportedly considering expanding his farewell foray.

The former King of Pop is expected to announce similar long-stay engagements in New York and Los Angeles, according to Perez Hilton, and may even embark on a world tour.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Katy loves Queen ... a lot

PEOPLE Katy Perry wants a tattoo of Freddie Mercury's face, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The I Kissed a Girl singer wants to pay homage to the late Queen frontman by getting a giant design of his head inked on her back.

She said: "I nearly got a huge tattoo of Freddie Mercury's face on my back a few years ago. It's probably for the best that I didn't get it done, but I still want to do it."

The 24-year-old singer has previously named the eccentric star as her musical idol because of his flamboyant personality.

She explained: "Freddie Mercury was — and remains — my biggest influence. The combination of his sarcastic approach to writing lyrics and his 'I don't give a f—' attitude really inspired my music."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Emily's on-screen double timing

CAREER Emily Blunt found it "strange" kissing Tom Hanks and his son, femalefirst.co.uk reports.

The actress shared a love scene with the elder Hanks in Charlie Wilson's War and also kissed his son, Colin, in The Great Buck Howard.

"I was before dad," Colin said. "Without sounding chauvinistic and possessive of her — I had her first ... Emily did say ... 'It's very strange to kiss both the son and the father.'"

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Big Sheen sisters
Charlie Sheen and wife Brooke Mueller welcomed twins Max and Bob on March 14, but the proud parents aren't the only ones jumping for joy: Sheen and ex Denise Richards' daughters Sam, five, and Lola, three, are excited to be big sisters. METRO NEWS SERVICES

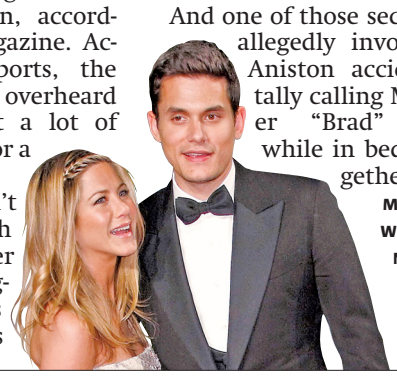
Celebrity Buzz

John planning tell-all?

RUMOUR John Mayer is considering dishing dirt now that he's split again from Jennifer Aniston, according to Star magazine. According to reports, the singer has been overheard saying he's got a lot of great material for a tell-all book.

"John just can't keep his mouth shut," a Mayer pal tells the magazine. "He's telling friends that he's thinking of going public with all their juicy secrets."

And one of those secrets allegedly involves Aniston accidentally calling Mayer "Brad" — while in bed together.



METRO WORLD NEWS

Guy on the rebound?

RUMOUR This is one way to move on. Recently divorced Guy Ritchie was spotted having dinner in London earlier this week with Elle Macpherson. The reportedly enjoyed each other's company at the Knotting Hill Brasserie, staying until after midnight. They then left separately to avoid being photographed together, according to just jared.com.

METRO WORLD NEWS

LeAnn's secret affair?

RUMOUR LeAnn Rimes is reportedly having an affair with Eddie Cibrian, alleges female-first.co.uk according to Us Weekly magazine.

The website reports the 26-year-old star — who married her former backing dancer Dean Sheremet in 2002 — has been spotted kissing her married co-star after getting close to him on the set of TV movie Northern Lights, according to reports.

Security camera footage from Laguna Beach hotspots Mosun and Club M shows the two holding hands and kissing on a romantic dinner date. The couple also reportedly met for a three-hour tryst at the Malibu Beach Inn on March 14, the website also alleges.

Cibrian — who has recently appeared in the shows Ugly Betty and Samantha Who? — married model Brandi Glanville in 2001 and the couple have two young sons, aged five and 23 months.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Welcome to marriage: Jon to Vince

ADVICE Vince Vaughn, let your pal Jon Favreau be the first one to welcome you to the "day shift," people.com is suggesting.

Favreau, who has been married with children for a number of years, talked to People about his friend and costar's recent engagement at the L.A. premiere of I Love You, Man, and what that means for Vaughn's lifestyle.

"Vince has been single for a number of years and we've been on different schedules," Favreau said. "He was sort of on the night shift; I was on the day shift, living on opposite ends of town."

And, he admits, as he settled down, "town" got smaller. "My trick really so far has been to work in town. I won't work on movies that as a director take me out of town.

"I like to be in California so I can be involved with my kids' school life, their personal life and be a dad and a husband," he said. "And that helps balance out the crazy hours and bigger than life career that I'm lucky to have."

As for his own history with Vaughn — the 38-year-old ladies' man who is finally settling down himself with Albertan Kyla Weber — the guy friends have come full circle, it seems.

"It was nice to work with him on Couples Retreat, and that movie is about couples, and it was interesting to explore that with him after our first experience with Swingers. And that was about being single. So, I think as our lives change, the subject matter of our movies change too, reflecting our lives," Favreau said.

He added: "I wish Vince the best. He's always been a smart guy. He's always been decisive at everything he does in his life and his career. I'm always impressed with his choices and the way that he goes about things."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Anna's funny life philosophy

PEOPLE Anna Faris has the perfect solution for dealing with challenging situations: Find the humour in everything, people.com reports.

"I'm embarrassed on almost a daily basis," Faris, 32, tells Self magazine for its April issue. "You sort of have to suck it up sometimes."

Take, for instance, when fans approach The House Bunny star. Often, she says, the conversations are less than tactful.

"They say stuff like, 'You're so much shorter in person,'" Faris says. "Or 'Oh, my god, you look just like that girl, but you are a lot prettier than she is.'

"You have to grin and bear it," Faris says. "I might say in return, 'I know I looked skinnier in The House Bunny, but thanks to my diet of beer and doughnuts, I'm back to my fightin' weight!'"

The funny actress says she developed her sense of humour over the years after being raised in a strict environment with conservative parents.

"Anything with a V-neck was forbidden," she says of her regimented childhood.

In fact, Faris still strives for her parents' approval. "Even though I'm now in my 30s, I still have my parents sort of haunting me to 'act appropriate' and 'have good manners,'" she says, noting that she's found a way to deal with the issue. "I buy my mom off," Faris jokes. "With the Scary Movies, I started giving her Louis Vuitton handbags. "Now she wants a villa in Tuscany," she says. "I've created a monster!"

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Timberlake Tequila on way

CAREER Looks like Justin Timberlake is exploring yet another profession.

The singer, actor, restaurant investor and clothing designer is reportedly interested in getting into the tequila business, according to Page Six. Timberlake recently stopped by a Mexican distillery, where he was caught on video sampling the goods.

"This was one of his many meetings over the last two years in development of his tequila business," his rep tells the newspaper.

METRO WORLD NEWS

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